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This issue of "The English Record," devoted largely to the teaching of composition, includes such articles as "Writing in the Reading Class"; "A Sequence of Writing Tasks for a Composition Elective for Juniors and Seniors"; "An Inquiry into the Composing Process"; "A Spin-off from Kenneth Koch's 'Wishes, Lies, and Dreams'"; "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching Poetry to the Elementary School Child"; "Individualized Instruction and the Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline"; and "Never Write Like You Talk," "Commonplace Book, Venerable Teaching Tool" discusses the history and advantages of using the journal (or commonplace book) and diary as an educational and writing tool. In "What Is Language Sensitivity" the changing role and meanings of language and its effects are examined. Other articles related to the teaching of composition include "Techniques and Materials for Improving Reading Skills in Secondary English," "The Elementary Pupil as Textbook Consumer," "On Teaching Augustan Poetry," and "The Handicapped Child in Children's Literature: Themes, Patterns, and Stereotypes." (TS)

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VOL. XXVI **WINTER, 1974** **No. 1**

TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE

Individualized Instruction and the Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline ..... *Lee Brown* 2

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching Poetry to the Elementary School Child ..... *Carole Marks Schulkind* 8

Social Factors and Speech Variation: Some Observations in Albany, New York ..... *Richard L. Light* 15

The Elementary Pupil as Textbook Consumer ..... *Walter Holden* 26

COMPOSITION 32

Writing in the Reading Class ..... *Marion Bossart* 33

A Sequence of Writing Tasks for a Twenty-Week Composition Elective for Juniors and Seniors ..... *Thomas F. Callaghan* 39

An Inquiry into the Composing Process ..... *Arthur G. Hale* 46

Insults, Smart Remarks, and Other Things I Might Have Said: A Spin-off from Kenneth Koch's *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams* ..... *Agnes J. Webb* 57

Commonplace Book, Venerable Teaching Tool ..... *Richard E. Drdek* 62

What is Language Sensitivity? ..... *Marjorie Drabkin* 66

Are the S.A.T.'s Telling Us Something? ..... *Jerome Carlin* 71

(Never Write like (?) you Talk ..... *Harvey Minkoff* 75

On Teaching Augustan Poetry ..... *John E. Sitter* 83

Alternatives in Teaching Vocabulary ..... *Carol Sinnott* 88

The Handicapped Child in Children's Literature: Themes, Patterns and Stereotypes ..... *Barbara Holland Baskin* 91

Media Review ..... *Linda C. Edison* 104

ERIC/RCS Report ..... *Rodney J. Barth* 105

"But, Teacher..." ..... *David Vallelunga* 110

EMPHASIS

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Individualized Instruction And The Rhythmic Claims of Freedom And Discipline[1]

Lee Brown

Ralph Tyler (1950) suggests that educational goals be sifted through two screens—the screens of psychology and philosophy. And although individualized instruction does not seem to be an educational goal, it is generally justified in terms of learning outcomes. That is, certain behavioral changes are supposed to take place as a result of a program's being individualized; therefore, it seems most pertinent that INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION, which has already passed through the screen of psychology, be put to the test of philosophy. And this will be the business of the next few pages.

Specifically I have chosen the educational philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead to function as that screen. Few figures bridge the two cultures so magnificently—mathematician, logician, educator, administrator and defender of the arts.

I propose to begin by assigning some specific characteristics to the substance of our program before I submit it to the screen. I am concerned here about one particular kind of individualized program which may be more easily identified by the schemata in Figure 1. (See next page)

The Tappan Zee program, less affectionately known as "The System," ironically enough, attempts to do just that—provide a rational base, or system, to the school's educational effort. Other descriptors which aren't necessarily obvious but are implied by the diagram are behavioral objectives, mastery learning, continuous progress, and learning activity packages. Other less crucial attributes are Resource Centers, open registration, flexible scheduling, and variable staffing. And there is more—work-study, independent study, an extended school year, open campus—the list goes on like a bibliography of Dwight Allen training films.

These are of course the terms and concepts of contemporary individualized instruction; however, the task at hand requires that we use Professor Whitehead's definitions and constructs. The screen determines the shape, size, and texture of that which will pass through it.

In "The Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline," the construct begun earlier in "Aims of Education" is elaborated and developed.

Three of its postulates seem to have special implications for individualized learning.

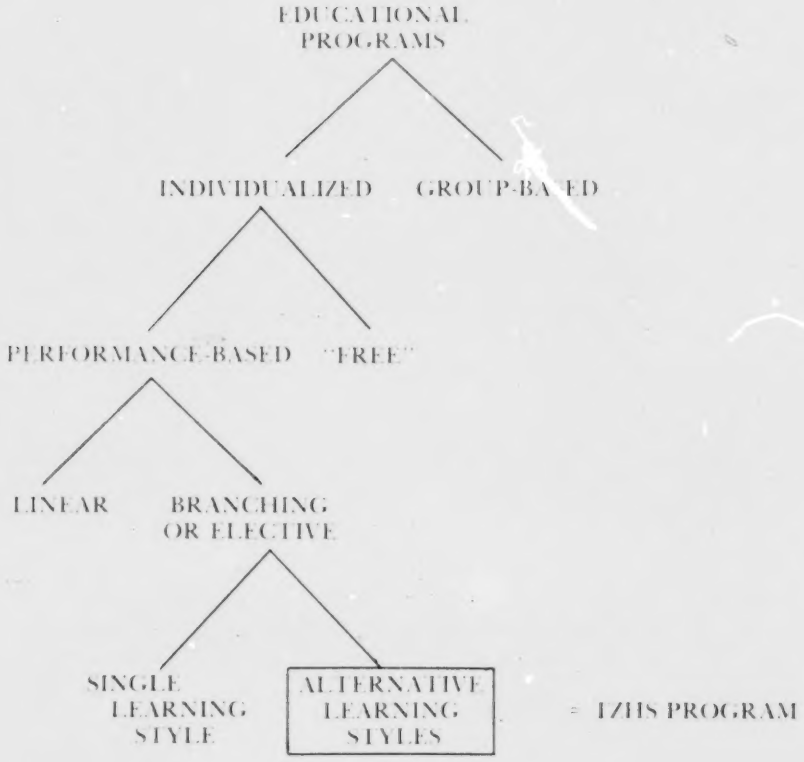

Figure 1. A branching tree diagram for learning programs.

The *first postulate* states that the process of education is divided into three major periods—The Stages of Romance, Precision and Generalization. These stages, like other stages of growth, are not discrete but are evolutionary—if the first branches of the tree die, the whole tree dies.

The Stage of Romance is dominated by an insistent curiosity which requires the freedom to explore. In the learning of language, this stage generally begins in infancy and extends into elementary school. The Stage of Romance is crucial because it supplies the bedrock of interest and meaningfulness upon which the behaviors and expectations of the later stages are predicated. It is the teacher's task to "prevent the dryrot of

inert ideas" by keeping this Romance alive during all of the stages of learning. The individualizing teacher in an elective program seems to have some special advantages toward this end; however, the concept of "behavioral objectives" seems to present some special difficulties.

Whitehead's discussion of "inert ideas" will tend to make any behaviorist slightly uncomfortable. The behavioral objective, in spite of the fact that it represents a dynamic competency, too often lies passively on the unit record sheet. The Learning Activity Package reflects the behaviorist's prescription for learning success. This approach implies the easy, "small-bite-at-a-time" path to success and presumes as axiomatic the notion that all subjects can be learned in this way. Perhaps subjects can, but will competencies acquired through safe, low-frustration methods maintain the Romance and sustain the excitement that more spontaneous and risky encounters with learning provide?

The second stage, the Stage of Precision, is characterized by mastery—"knowing the subject exactly, and for retaining in the memory its salient features (p. 34)." This stage usually occurs during grades 4 through 10. The Stage of Precision requires some special explanation if mis-interpretation is to be avoided. The desire for Precision is the natural offspring of the Stage of Romance. If Romance dies, Precision becomes a "bastard" in every sense of the word. Far too often, even in our individualized program, the erring teacher tends to make the discipline an *end* rather than the *means* to more "intimate" freedom that it should properly become.

The third stage Whitehead calls the Stage of Generalization. For the English disciplines, begun early, this period should be in full sway by the end of the child's high school experience. During the Stage of Generalization interests and skills combine with immediate experience to bring the . . . .

> "individual toward a comprehension of the art of life; and by the art of life I (Whitehead) mean the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual environment (p. 39)."

At this point, the learner should be able to achieve an "understanding of an insistent present"—"an understanding of the stream of events which pass through his life, which is his life." But again how many behavioral objectives—most of which are nearly packaged products of the curriculum reform movement—carry the power to provide this kind of understanding? Given Whitehead's definition that "Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge," we need to ask if we have opened up the school enough. If the teacher is to help weave the seamless coat, he must give the student more than a collection of threads. He must, as Whitehead puts it, "make the pupil see the woods by means of the trees." The success of the individualized program is predicated upon the ability of the teacher to understand how each child sees education as an immediate force in his life—an understanding which exists only sporadically and somewhat amateurishly in the best of circumstances.

The *second postulate* states that the "two principles, freedom and discipline are not antagonists but should be so adjusted in the child's life that they correspond to a natural sway . . . of the *developing personality* (p. 30)." Since the "developing personality" is a unique commodity, it would seem reasonable that only those instructional techniques which are accommodating to this kind of growth would be considered as being supportive of the process of education. This too sounds like the province of individualized instruction.

A. N. Whitehead clearly repeats that the "development of the whole personality must be attended to." At this point, it is reasonable to inquire how we as teachers of English have gone about this business. My frank reply would be that we have barely begun. The "developing personality" of the child continues to be an "untouchable" in the field of education in spite of a veritable plethora of small group interaction techniques, transactional analysis, and Whitehead's intimation that it is the matter that determines whether we succeed or fail as educators.

In some ways the traditional teacher had an edge in the area of involvement with the total personality. The schoolmarm of the Post-Victorian era was a direct assault on the developing personality. Her cold penetrating look, her vicious sarcastic tongue, and breastbeating morality told students they were dealing with a formidable critic of the entire process of growing up. In short, she was a dragon to be slain—a rite of passage to a personal life of the mind; and, in this way, she dramatically participated in the personality growth of a particular kind of student. Unfortunately for most, the dragon usually won.

The suburbanite teacher seems to find participation a bit more difficult. In the early days of our program troublesome epithets like "learning facilitator" and "resource person" seemed to imply that one hid his personality under a bushel. For some, the new program implied "non-directive" behavior. Other teachers openly referred to themselves as being "dethroned" and glared silently at their students as if they were so many rebel peasants.

Some opponents of individualized learning even developed self-defeating strategies such as handing out Learning Activity Packages and telling their pupils to work quietly while they sat behind their desks and waited for the inevitable frustration and failure.

As the program developed and ties loosened and jackets gave way to sweaters, new patterns of informality seemed to evolve; however, only sporadically has this new informality translated itself into teacher learner relationships which truly do attend to the total personality of the learner. Commuting teachers, 100% bussing of students, the suburban cultural milieu all seem to prevail against the occurence of this kind of involvement; and, more often than not, it seems to me that neither side wants it.

Schools seem to have little use for the total personality. What schools measure are the results of teaching for precision. These results,

which are in New York the PEP Test scores, SAT scores, Regents scores, rarely are connected in a primary way to the intellectual life of the learner; they are at best secondary reinforcers evoking visceral responses to artificial experiences.

The *third postulate* deals with the role of the teacher. Whitehead states:

> It is for him (the teacher) to elicit the enthusiasm by resonance from his own personality, and to create the environment of a larger knowledge and a firmer purpose. He is there to avoid the waste... (p. 39).

This somewhat grand role description is restrained, however, by a more modest companion statement:

> But for all your (teacher) stimulation and guidance, the creative impulse toward growth come from within and is intensely characteristic of the individual (p. 39).

Let us examine more closely the teaching skills implied by this role. First of all, he must be able to select the appropriate learning environment for the "child's stage of growth and it must be adopted to individual needs." This environment must, as Whitehead says, "answer the call to life within the child." A second competency is the ability to "discover in practice that exact balance between freedom and discipline which will give the greatest rate of progress over the things to be known (p. 35)."

I think each competency is, in part at least, an art, but art requires nurture. Both material and policy are required to give the teacher a reasonable chance of finding that balance.

Flexible scheduling, open registration, learning activity packages form part of the means of providing that support and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been expended in the past few years to provide that support. However, spending money on in-service education and voting in policies cannot guarantee the success of an artistic endeavor for, as Whitehead notes, there "is no abstract formula which will give information applicable to all subjects, to all types of pupils, or to each individual pupil, except indeed the formula of rhythmic sway (p. 35)." I suggest individualized instruction offers no abstract formula but does offer new opportunities to discover each child's rhythmic sway.

In summary, after all of the screening is finished, what are the results? Now let us examine our siftings. In the deposit it is possible to detect some good education—the discipline of the mastery learning, the freedom of the student to choose his teacher, the responsibility for selecting courses, and high moments during personalized study projects when the "mastery of knowledge (becomes) the most intimate freedom attainable (p. 30)." And most important, during the 30% of the day when both teacher and learner are unscheduled, student and learners sometimes do find each other and the "rhythmic sway"; at this point, wisdom begins to happen and education becomes the noblest of professions.

In the residue, we find an uneven mixture of coarse gravel and fool's gold—we find organizational clumsiness, educational practices valued more than education and all of the old evils which have plagued man since the struggle began.

In the mix, we observe a number of uninvited concomitants to the practice of individualized instruction. Individualized instruction is controversial; the teacher had to become political. Individualized instruction is expensive; the administrator had to be armed with improved scores, to defend it. Individualized instruction generates an endless wave of details; a monumental paper shuffling effort was required to manage these details. Individualized instruction is infinitely demanding in terms of planning for learning styles, interests and capabilities; the teacher must constantly struggle to find the point at which he stops planning on the basis of identified needs and shifts to a more general reliance on the strength of his own intellectual interests and habits.

And at last we have the conclusion that the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead makes a *fine* screen. But was the screen *too* fine? I think not. We are in an era when universal ineptitude is justified in the name of personal freedom and the technology of education threatens to overwhelm us with complex practices that are nice in their sophistication but hollow in substance. Whitehead warned, "... when ideals have sunk to the level of practice, the result is stagnation (p. 29)." Watergate, the cult of nostalgia, the energy crisis, the success of William Peter Blatty all seem to testify to a moral spiritual paralysis that pales Joyce's Dublin by comparison. It seems reasonable that the old education take a large share of the blame for this condition. The new education, for which individualized instruction has become the rallying cry, must learn from the indiscretions of the past and invite the philosopher to return to his proper place at the heart of the educational process.

Tappan Zee High School
Orangeburg, New York

1 A. N. Whitehead, "The Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline." In **The Aims of Education and Other Essays**. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929. Pp. 29-41.

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching Poetry to the Elementary School Child

Carole Marks Schulkind

The interdisciplinary approach to teaching poetry, which combines poetry with other learning experiences, is a valuable tool for enhancing the child's intellectual and creative growth. The outcome is remarkably productive, involving both the SELF, that uniqueness which binds and separates us as human beings, and linguistic discipline. At the same time, it intensifies the child's perceptual awareness, utilizes many language skills, and is a strong motivational force in factual retention.

In order to apply specific interdisciplinary approaches to teaching poetry which encompass other subjects like Science, Math, Social Studies, Art, and Music, it is first necessary to achieve a successful initial exposure, and to incorporate the techniques of poetics.

Initial exposure is a broad category which includes examples, key words, sounds, reading, timing, facilitation, and the atmosphere in the classroom.

Holograms of manuscripts, which illustrate both original and finished poems and show how a poem is made to work, are excellent examples for purposes of initial exposure. A display of these, which may be obtained from standard poetry anthologies such as *An Introduction to Literature*, by Barnet, Berman, and Burto,[1] encourages students to save their original and improved versions like "real" poets.

After seeing such examples, the key words of the poems should be discussed. The key words within a poem relate to the child's own experience, unlock feelings, and establish rapport between the child and the poem. Kenneth Koch uses such keys when he talks about "secret" and "mystery."[2] Sylvia Ashton-Warner uses love, hate, fear, and sex words to open the passage which leads from the child's inner image to the written word.[3]

Poetry's keys also have strong ties with the poem's sound, that which initially creates appeal for the child. Without eliciting immediate understanding, the teacher should read aloud, emphasizing whatever repetition there is in the poem. If the instructor reads well, the beauty and timbre of the words, and a discussion of what they make the child think of, will serve as motivation for deeper exploration.

A sensitive, dramatic reading and discussion of William Wordsworth's "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known," for example, could fulfill the emphasis on key words and sound at the same time:

Strange fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"[4]

Note the keys: "strange," "passion," "near," "dreams," "dead," and the hesitant, closed, lonely sounds in lines like those in stanza four, "and now----------nearer still." This poem touches both the adult's and the child's sensitivity to the queer combinations of love and dread which haunt us as humans.

Listening to the human voice reading poetry is an impetus to poetry study which could be provided by a poetry hour, with the teacher and/or the children reading, or by listening to records. Records of John Ciardi or Robert Frost reading their poems will give a single poetry session or an entire unit a fine start, as will old ballads or songs from Shakespeare sung by Richard Dyer-Bennett. The teacher who makes an effort to read poetry without inhibition and to be *dramatic* will be much rewarded by class response. When reading Poe's "The Raven," for exam-

ple, atmosphere can be created by turning out the lights, drawing the shades, and lighting a candle. Additionally, the children should be encouraged to plan a similar poetry reading with their favorite poems, perhaps taping or videotaping the sessions for future enjoyment or for other classes.

Timing is a crucial factor in a good initial exposure. Poetry instruction must be timed to the attention span, but not without the teacher's awareness that in poetry as well as in everything else, the attention span equals the interest. Writing can follow reading fairly quickly, but the teacher should make sure the children understand before they write. Testing verbally and according to ability by asking for topics, lines, words, or writing a group poem will indicate readiness and facilitate timing. Rushing the children should be avoided, but so should allowing the project to become stale. The faster children should be encouraged to write two or three poems if they wish. To encourage optimum creativity, all of the children should be convinced that the choice of method and pace is up to the individual.

Good initial exposure also requires the presence of the teacher as facilitator. Giving help when asked, keeping a pleasant atmosphere, and avoiding lecture or imposition will aid inspiration and encourage the child to communicate from the sense of SELF when discussing and writing poetry. The instructor's attitude in the introductory stage of teaching poetry, regardless of the eventual subject orientation, will determine the children's attitude in direct relation to the amount of sincerity, truth, and freedom discernible in the classroom with the teacher-facilitator.

This type of atmosphere is conducive to communication that is real to the child. For within the child's fragile world is insecurity and fear, passion and wisdom, and many extremes of happiness and sorrow that have nothing at all to do with the sugar and peppermint found in much poetry for children. If children are encouraged to keep in touch with their feelings by reading good poetry and writing their own, the connection between the reality of the experience and the reality of the poem strengthens sincerity and truth while exercising communication skill. A discussion about an animal, a loved toy, a favorite place, an inanimate object, or the teacher's own experience in childhood in connection with the poem being discussed will help the students to go beyond the poem into the SELF, where the imagination thrives.

Freedom of expression leads to truth in imagination only without insistence on constrictions like imitation, rhyme, or meter. Although rhyme and meter are a segment of poetics, these can prove to be constricting to expression because the means become the end. The exposure should therefore include rhyme and meter as occasional means to poetic expression in the poetry of the past, but should emphasize selectivity, tone, and language as more relevant tools.

Any other techniques of poetics, like internal rhyme, repetition, onomatopoieia, and alliteration,[7] are valid when introduced as concepts, to be utilized if they fit into the point of the poem the children are writing or recognized as they contribute to the life of the poem the children are reading. The brainwashed child who insists that a poem *has to* rhyme can be told this "rule":

> If the rhyme helps the poem, it belongs. If it does not help, it makes the poem sound fake.

Additionally, the avenue to poetics may be found in experimentation with records of animal sounds, noise contests, echoes, or with sense training itself.[8] The outcomes of such an approach are threefold: the discovery of the excitement of language, the release of the individual's capability of expression, and the provision for perceptual growth and self-awareness.

Before finally incorporating the desired subject, the interdisciplinary approach requires the teacher to give approval, to create exposure, to be daring about difficulty, and to be bold about new materials.

If approval consists of praise, encouragement, and suggestion without criticism, it also consists of concrete rewards. Making the poems into a book,[9] publishing poems in the P. T. A. Newsletter, or the local newspaper, etc., will bring both concrete reward and tangential learning. Editing, layout, and letter-writing can be injected painlessly when the result is publication.

Good exposure also means the availability of poetry books for browsing. Lists of poetry books according to subject will alleviate frustration, and attractive covers placed side by side with a review by a peer might intrigue a child enough for an investigation.

The nature of language, especially in poetry, is a reciprocal communication. The most rewarding aspects of the interdisciplinary approach to teaching poetry will begin to take shape and increase when both teacher and student have fully explored the initial exposure and techniques of poetics with a certain degree of success, and are ready to make the connection between poetry and the other disciplines.

An astonishing reciprocity between the disciplines can be found in the relationship between mathematics and poetics. First, the linguistic precision of words like cylinder, cube, plane, and angle are used to increase the awareness of the mathematical character of the environment. Then, this awareness can be utilized to include the SELF by having the child think of his or her own body as symmetrical, and as a series of angles or planes. Poetry related to the study of mathematics can be introduced here to deepen the relationship. Poems such as Williams' "The Great Figure," in which the recognition of a number means order, Sandberg's "Arithmetic,"[8] which makes arithmetic a fun thing to do, and Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" are particularly appropriate.

Science also provides a ripe field for the interdisciplinary approach. Here again, the human body can be a teaching device for poetry, with emphasis on its biology. In Part Nine of Whitman's "I Sing the Body Electric," he actually celebrates the individual parts of his body. There are also many excellent animal poems which can be incorporated into the study of animal behavior. Among these, the most notable collections can be found in Gwendolyn Reed's *Bird Songs*, which includes poems like "The Heron," by Theodore Roethke, "The Woodpecker," by Andrew Marvell, and "The Bird of Night," by Randall Jarrell, a poem on the owl. Also by Randall Jarrell is "Bats" from Karol Weiss' collection, *A Paper Zoo*. The poem, which details bat habits and other useful information, is more interesting than a dry paragraph any time. In the same collection, "The Lion," by William Jay Smith, and "The Snake," are also appealing and informative. Collecting poems on a particular animal or aspect of science is an activity which has many side benefits for the child: comparisons, library skills, evaluation skills, increased reading skills, enjoyment, and not least of all, the involvement of the SELF.

Social Studies has unlimited possibilities as an approach to teaching poetry. Children's anthologies, such as *Here I Am*, an anthology of poems written by young people of America's minority groups, and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* provide insight, identification, and perspective. Poems about other parts of the U.S.A., other countries, places, rivers, and all the other facts studied in geography have vivid qualities to the child who reads and writes poems about them. When studying other periods, it would serve many purposes for the teacher to have the children read and write poems which create the mood of another time from a child's point of view so that the study becomes real. This activity can include anything the curriculum prescribes from cave dwelling to the future.

Art holds myriad possibilities. The children can study a painting and write their reaction to it, or create a poem and a companion environment box which reflects a particular mood. Writing poems to go with UNICEF cards and sending them will cultivate an awareness that goes beyond art and poetry. Composing and illustrating poems on colors and shapes, with color, shape, and poem complementing each other is another delightful way of melding these disciplines with excellent results which maximize creativity and freedom.

Poetry is song, so the musical approach is practically self-evident. Writing poetry after listening to music is an approach that definitely should not be neglected. Few children will fail to respond and to write after hearing Richard Strauss' "Merry Pranks of Till Eulenspiegel," Edvard Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite," or Felix Mendelsohn's "Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream." An anthology which deserves mention here is *Untune the Sky* a selection of thematically musical poems containing delights such as Tennyson's "Blow, Bugle, Blow," Campion's "Corinna," and Yeats' "The Fiddler of Dooney."

An interdisciplinary approach to teaching poetry encompasses:

> - - - all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
>
> All things counter, original, spare, strange;
> Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> With swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim;[9]

Poetry leads to knowledge and follows from knowledge because it includes the SELF, the creative and meaningful, without which knowledge becomes dry, impersonal, and separated from life. The most intense and disciplined of the written arts, poetry is a perfect vehicle for the developing mind. Let us give it supportive architecture within the disciplines, and achieve the optimum creativity in the expanding SELF of the growing child.

[1] Barnet, Sylvan, Morton Berman, and William Burto, **An Introduction to Literature**, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971), pp. 465-574.

[2] Kenneth Koch, **Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?** (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 35.

[3] Sylvia Ashton-Warner, **Teacher** (New York: Simon and Schuster), pp. 31-32.

[4] William Wordsworth, "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known," Hazard Adams, editor, **Poetry, An Introductory Anthology** (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), pp. 116-117.

[5] A good browsing source for the creative teacher is Alex Preminger's **Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics.**

[6] Carole Schulkind and Barbara Baskin, "Impaled On a Wild Entanglement of Lace: Poetics for the Young Gifted Child," **Elementary English**, November, 1973, pp. 1209-1214.

[7] **Ibid.**

[8] See attached bibliography.

[9] Gerard Manly Hopkins, "Pied Beauty," Lynn Altenbernd and Leslie Lewis, **Poems** (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 398.

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East Setauket
New York

Social Factors and Speech Variation: Some Observations in Albany, New York*

Richard L. Light

Educators and linguists alike have shown a growing interest in the study of children's use of language. Educators have been concerned since it has been suggested that the language children use in school is closely linked to teacher attitudes toward them, and ultimately to pupil performance (Williams, 1970; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Linguists in turn have demonstrated that social factors such as sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group of speaker and listener may influence children's use of language (Fischer, 1958; Labov, 1966). The study described here is concerned with some of these social factors as they influence the speech of a sample of lower socioeconomic group black and white children in Albany, New York. The results reported are taken from twenty-five interviews of five white and seven black children, aged ten to twelve. The children interviewed were all pupils in an elementary school in Albany's South End, a neighborhood predominantly inhabited by black families. All of the children participating in the project come from lower socioeconomic class families, as do nearly all of the children in attendance at the school. School population is reported as roughly 85% black, and 15% "other," mostly white.[1]

The tapes of the interviews were analyzed to determine the extent to which the non-standard forms of four grammatical features were used. The non-standard forms considered here were multiple negation and absence of suffixal -Z (i.e., absence of the suffix marking plural and possessive nouns and the third person singular form of the verb). This data was then analyzed to determine how the social factors of race of the interviewer and race and sex of the child, may have affected the use of these forms.

In standard English, suffixal -Z is realized as /s/, /z/, or /iz/ on most plural nouns, possessives, and third person singular present tense verbs. It has been noted in studies of non-standard dialects, however, that suffixal -Z may be absent in the above three grammatical categories. In obtaining figures which represent how often the plural noun, possessive and third person singular verb were marked with the standard suffixal -Z form, the number of potential occurrences, i.e., the number of times marking or realization of the suffix was grammatically possible, was first tabulated.[2] Once the number of potential occurrences of a suffix was

determined, the percentages of actual occurrence or realization of the feature could be computed. A similar process was used in computing the realization of the non-standard feature of multiple negation. (Absence of multiple negation is considered a standard feature in the discussion which follows, e.g., *I don't have any* is standard; *I don't have none* is non-standard.)

This process of analyzing features in the speech of these twelve lower socioeconomic group black and white children yielded the data noted in Figure 1. That figure summarizes data on four groups for the four features analyzed. The four groups are classed according to race of interviewer and race of child. Sex of interviewer is a constant (female). Sex of child is an uncontrolled and, as we shall see, non-crucial, variable in this analysis. For the conversations as a whole, race of the interviewers had no sizeable effect on frequency of any of the four features for either black or white children. For frequencies of absence of two features, (i.e., the non-standard forms of the two features) plural and possessive, there are no sizeable differences which correlate with race of the children. For the other two socially significant features of multiple negation and third person singular, however, this difference correlating with race is considerable. A further analysis of the data displayed in Figure 1 reveals several facts about the language of the children studied.

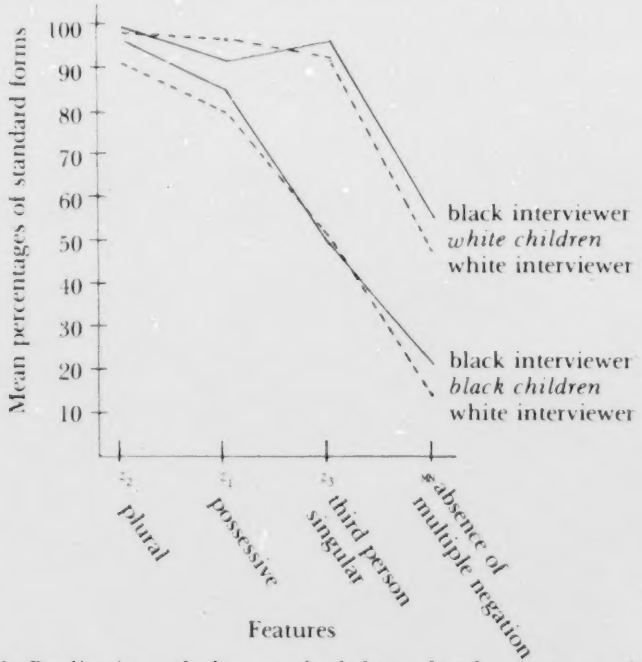

Figure 1. Realization of the standard form for four grammatical features by black and white children in twenty-five interviews.

Noun plural suffix absence occurred infrequently in the taped speech of the Albany children. There was only isolated occurrence of plural suffix absence in the recorded speech of both black and white children; all children used it where appropriate in over 90% of its potential occurrences. The potentials for using the plural suffix were 1,037 and 725 occurrences for the black and white children respectively. There are a few nouns which in black English do not regularly take the suffixal plural marker.[3] They are nouns such as *movie*, *cent* and *year*, which like the nouns *sheep* and *deer* in standard English, are subject to different rules of plural formation. It was noted however, that few of the unmarked nouns used by the children were words belonging to that special sub-class for which the plural is often absent in black English. These nouns, which occurred several times in the speech of the Albany children, were consistently marked with the plural suffix when the marking was grammatically appropriate.

Previous research has indicated that among speakers of black English, absence of the plural suffix occurs less often than does absence of the possessive suffix, and far less frequently than does absence of the third person singular present tense suffix (Fasold and Wolfram, 1970:78). After analyzing plural absence among adolescent peer groups in New York City, Labov (1968:163) noted that:

> "... the non-standard Negro English plural is quite intact, and the small amount of disturbance in the plural is the result of (a) phonological processes of consonant cluster simplification, (b) several individual items that have zero plurals in non-standard Negro English, and (c) a few individual speakers who show much less regularity in plural inflections than the norm for non-standard Negro English."

While Shuy's (1967) study of Detroit black English revealed that plural absence occurred more frequently among lower class children than among middle class children, the incidence of plural suffix absence was very low, even for the former group. An analysis of conversations of 10-11 year old black children in Washington, D.C. also revealed a low frequency of plural suffix absence, (7%), although it was noted that in those conversations where a relaxed, spontaneous atmosphere prevailed, the incidence of plural suffix absence was as high as 45% (Light, 1971:158). A comparison of the figures reflecting plural suffix absence in the speech of the Albany black children with 10-12 year old Detroit black children, and 10-11 year old Washington black children in the studies noted above, reveals that the Albany children tended to use the standard variant more often (96%) than either the Detroit or Washington children (93% for both areas.)

Previous studies have indicated that the possessive suffix is absent from the speech of those who use black English more often than is the plural suffix, but considerably less often than is the third person singular suffixal marker (Fasold and Wolfram, 1970:78). In studying possessive suffix absence, one must distinguish between the attributive and absolute possessive, for the suffix seems to be absent with much greater frequency from the attributive form. In his study of adolescent

speakers in Harlem, Labov found attributive possessive suffixal absence over 50% of the time, while the absolute possessive was regularly marked (Labov, et. al., 1968:169). (Examples: *This is my mother coat. The coat is my mother's.*)

In Detroit, Wolfram (1969:111) noted a sharp stratification between middle and lower class adult black speakers in use of the possessive suffix, with a 27% mean percentage of absence in the lowest working class group and no absence among the highest middle class sample. An examination of possessive suffix absence in the speech of the sample of Washington children revealed the tendency of older children to use the possessive suffix more frequently than younger children (Light, 1971:162). Figure 1 indicates a low incidence of attributive possessive suffix absence among the Albany subjects sampled. For the black children, this absence averaged between 15 and 20 per cent. A comparison of the Albany, Detroit, and Washington figures reflecting possessive suffix absence shows that the black children in Albany demonstrated much greater use of the possessive marker (83%) than did comparable children in either Detroit (71%) or Washington (55%).

In studies of black dialect in other locations, the absence of the suffix marker on the third person singular present tense verb is found to occur with greater frequency than absence of either the possessive or plural suffix (Fasold and Wolfram, 1970:78). Since possessive, plural and third singular markers are all formed by the same phonological rules, quantitative differences in their realization must be accounted for by something other than phonology. The regularity with which third person singular suffix absence occurs has led observers to state that this suffixal marker is not a part of the underlying grammar of black English (Labov, et. al. 1968:168). This conclusion is supported by analyses of the irregular, hypercorrection patterns for this feature, indicating the black dialect speaker's basic unfamiliarity with the standard rules governing use of the suffixal marker on third person singular forms.

Some interesting patterns of variation in the marking of this feature were observed within the speech of individual children in Albany. For example, the following pattern of alternation between the marked and unmarked third person singular present form of the verb *to go* was noted in a black child's explanation to the white interviewer of the cards used in a Bingo game:

> "... you have Bingo on the cards, it says B, B *go* all the way up to fifteen, an' G *go* to 29 or 30, yea, 30, 29, and I *go*, I *go* to 39. N *goes* to 30, 40, and G *goes* to 60 and after 60, the G *goes* to, yea, the N *goes* to 60 and the G *go* to 61 to 75."

Similar variations between absence and presence of the third person singular marker within the same sentence were observed in the speech of other black children in the study.

Wolfram (1969:168) found a sharp stratification among various adult black socioeconomic class groups in use of the third person singular marker, with absence of the suffix occurring rarely in the mid-

dle class groups and much more frequently among the lower class speakers.

The third column in Figure 1 summarizes third person suffixal absence for the Albany children. It indicates that this non-standard form was realized to some extent in the speech of all children, but that it was present a good deal more frequently in the speech of the black children. Given 122 potentials for use of the third singular suffix, the realization for the white children was 94%, while the potential of 365 for the black children was realized 50% of the time.

A comparison of the Albany, Washington and Detroit studies demonstrates that, as was the case for the plural and possessive suffixes, the percentage of absence for the third person singular marker was considerably lower for the Albany black children than for the subjects of the other two studies. A 50% absence for the Albany children compares with 80% and 81% for Washington and Detroit children respectively.

Multiple negation, the realization of an underlying negative element in more than one place in a sentence containing an indefinite pronoun, determiner, or adverb,[4] is a feature of non-standard white dialect as well as of black dialect, but there seem to be quantitive differences between white and black speakers' usage of this construction (Wolfram, 1969:153).

The study by Shuy, et. al. (1967:12) of black dialect in Detroit revealed a clear-cut stratification of multiple negation across black socioeconomic class groups, with a 77.8% mean percentage of realized multiple negation in the speech of the lowest working class adult blacks, and an 8.2% mean percentage of occurrence for the same feature among upper middle class adult black speakers.

The figures representing frequency of multiple negation in the speech of the Albany children are given in the last column in Figure 1. This indicates that multiple negation was present in the speech of all the subjects, but that it was realized with considerably higher frequency among the black children. Use of multiple negation averaged 50% for the white children and 80% for the black children. Put another way, the standard form was used 50% of the time by the white children and 20% by the black children.

As for the other three non-standard forms, the use of multiple negation by the Albany black children was somewhat less frequent than for comparable children in Detroit and Washington. Realization of multiple negation for the Albany children was 80%, while for Detroit and Washington, it was 90% and 81% respectively. For all four features considered in this study, then, the black children in Albany consistently showed a higher percentage of the standard form of those features than did comparable children in Washington and Detroit. We might speculate that the social dynamics in a relatively small "upstate" city, as opposed to those in large urban centers such as Washington and Detroit,

might contribute to an explanation of this fact. The fact that children participating in the study were selected by members of the school administration, and thus might, in many cases, be considered "lames" (Labov, 1972), may also suggest a partial explanation. Variables in the interview settings in the three cities might also have contributed, but it will take work beyond the scope *of this study to explain with some confidence* these consistent differences between cities.

Perhaps it is also well at this point to recall that the basic processes for formation of all four features examined are the same for all children in the sample. The process of realizing a negative on more than one item in a sentence, for example, is the same for all children. It is only in the frequency of use of this process that quantitative (not qualitative) differences appear across races in the Albany study. Further, as Burling (1973:49) has noted for the third person singular marker:

> "... by clinging to the third person singular -s, standard English still stops short of complete regularity [in verb forms], but this is only the final relic of a far more elaborate earlier system. When black speakers drop the -s, they simply take the ultimate step in regularizing the English verb. They lose nothing in meaning."

We might speculate then, that the higher percentage of third person singular marker deletion displayed by black children in this study and others, may in fact be an advantage in terms of efficiency of communication. This may be so since the third singular marker dropped (e.g., the -s of *comes* as in *He come here everyday*) is in fact redundant.[5]

In the discussion above we noted that for the conversations as a whole, race of interviewer had no sizeable correspondence with frequency of any of the four features in the speech of the twelve children. We also noted that race of child did not correlate to a sizeable extent with two of the features examined (plural and possessive markers). We did note a correspondence between frequency of use of two socially significant features (absence of third singular marker and multiple negation), and race of child. To check these observations, we made three additional analyses, with two variables matched and one tested. Results of these analyses are noted in Figures 2-4 below.

The first analysis matched race of interviewers (white) and sex of the children (female) and tested for a relationship between race of the children (three black and three white) and use of the four features. Results of this analysis, outlined on Figure 2, offer tentative support for the initial observation that there are sizeable differences between the black and white children in realization of the two socially significant features of multiple negation and absence of the third singular markers. This analysis also supports previous observations that the possessive and plural markers are not often absent in the speech of either black or white children. One might, in view of the previous discussion, have expected a spread of more than 14 percentage points between groups for multiple negation. A low number of potentials for this feature may in part account for this spread.

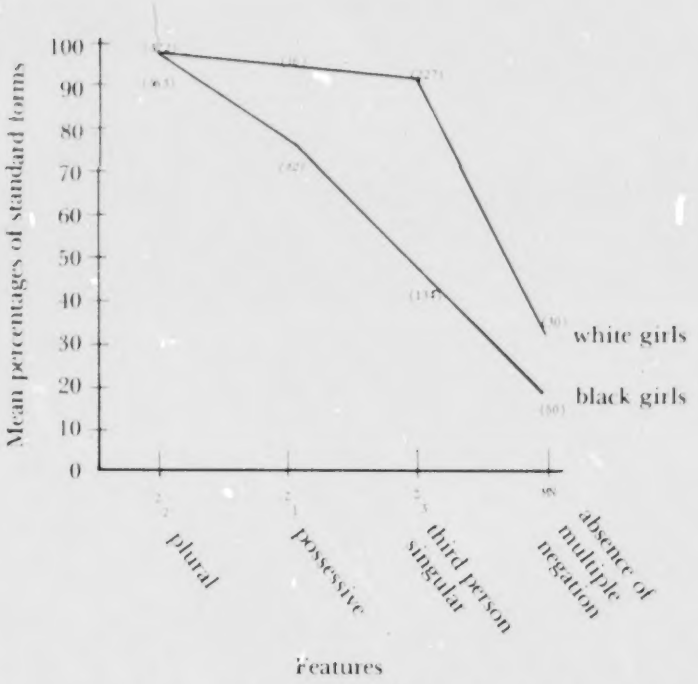

Figure 2. Realization of the standard form for four grammatical features by three black and three white girls with a white female interviewer. (Figures in parentheses indicate potentials, i.e., grammatically appropriate contexts, for realization of each feature.)

The second analysis, in which sex and race of children are matched, supports the suggestion that in the formal interview setting, race of interviewer has no consistent effect upon realization of the standard form for the four features (Figure 3). In conversations with the black interviewers there were more standard realizations of the plural marker, but fewer standard realizations of the other three features among the black male children tested in the sample. However, for these other three features (possessive, third singular, and multiple negation) there are differences of 22%, 25%, and 22% respectively in standard realization which correlate positively with a white interviewer. Thus the initial observation that race of interviewer had little effect upon the speech of the twelve children as a whole, must be tempered by this finding. A partial explanation of the apparently inconsistent influence of race of interviewer upon the four features in this analysis may again be due to the small potential for their realization.

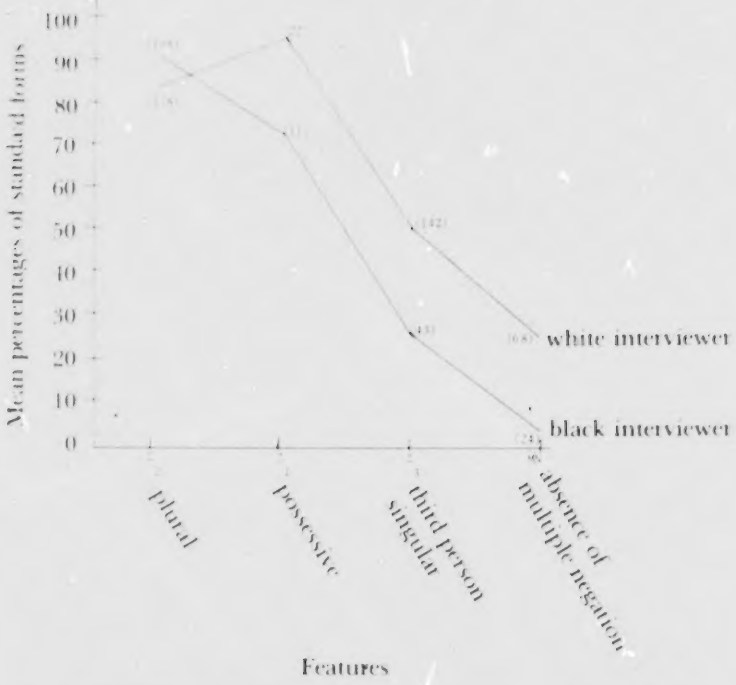

Figure 3. Realization of the standard form for four grammatical features by four black male children with black and white interviewers (female). Numbers in parentheses are potentials for realization of each feature.

The third analysis (Figure 4) indicates that sex of the child had no consistent effect and little influence in general upon realization of any of the four features. Some previous reports (Fischer, 1958; Fasold and Wolfram, 1974) have noted sex-correlated differences in use of standard and non-standard forms with females more often using the standard forms than males of comparable age and background. On the other hand, Politzer et. al. (1974:31) has noted a lack of sex-correlated ability by black children on a standard nonstandard English repetition test. Brown (1973) has speculated that increasing lack of sex-correlated differences in the use of certain speech features can be traced at least in part to the current emphasis upon equal rights for women. This study can contribute little to that argument. Further studies may explain the apparent lack of sex-correlated differences in recent studies of childrens' speech, including this one.

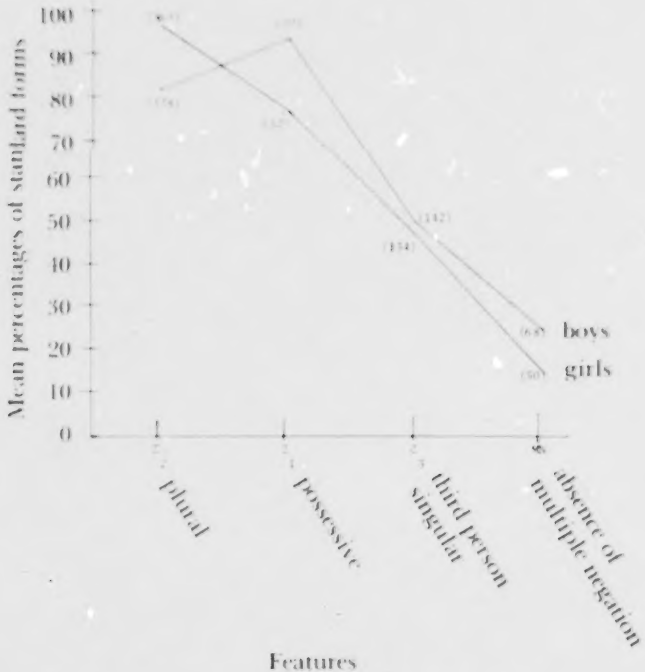

Figure 4. Realization of the standard form for four grammatical features by four male and three female children. Race of interviewer (white) and of children (black) are matched.

In sum, for the twelve black and white children interviewed, race of interviewer and sex of child had little influence, as compared with race of child, upon use of non-standard forms of those features examined. We noted also that all white children in the study used the non-standard form of these features to some degree in their speech. This finding suggests two possibilities:

1) if these white children speak standard English, then speakers of standard English do not realize the standard form of these features one hundred percent of the time. This would support Shuy's (1970) view of a "linguistic continuum" relationship between standard and non-standard dialects.

2) the white children may be incorporating non-standard black English variable rules in their grammar.

Partial support for one of these suggestions may be forthcoming from a current study to determine occurrence of these features in the speech of middle class black and white children in a suburb of Albany.

Race of child was a factor influencing frequency of use of two of the four non-standard forms examined. As might be expected, those two forms corresponding most highly with race of child are those socially significant forms highly stigmatized by the majority culture. Any explanation for the large quantitative difference between the black and white children's realization of these two non-standard forms must take into account differences in social interaction patterns and the expectancies of the two groups. We know that these two forms (absence of third singular marker and use of multiple negation) are disparaged by representatives of the majority culture (Burling, 1973). It may be that the white children who are more often in intimate contact with representatives of that culture, feel the pressure to "conform" (i.e., use standard forms) to a greater extent than black children. These white children may also perceive for themselves, to a greater extent than is possible for the black children, a role in that majority culture whose social values, including linguistic values, they will be called upon to endorse. These differing social perceptions on the part of children are likely to be significant considerations in any attempt to account for differing verbal behaviors, including those which have been noted here. Further research is called for to determine relationships between language variations, these perceptions, and other social factors before we can with some certainty account for the linguistic variations noted in this study.

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The interviews were conducted in a lounge at the children's school and recorded on cassette tapes. Each child was interviewed by a black woman and a white woman at separate times. The interviews were not rigidly structured in terms of the questions posed or the nature of the topics discussed. Each child was encouraged to talk about what was of interest to him, and the children seemed to produce the greatest amount of speech when discussing favorite games, television programs and camp activities, and when describing friends and family members. While the relatively formal interview situation is limited in terms of how much natural, typical language behavior is actually produced, it has been noted (Shuy, Wolfram and Riley, 1967 [6]) that such a setting yields useful information about the speech used in a relatively formal setting, including the school. Since all children participating in this study were selected by school administrators, the data reported is likely to reflect "the linguistic consequences of being a lame" (Labov, 1972:255-291).

Due to the difficulty in distinguishing whether or not -Z was present when it was immediately followed by a sibilant or when the base form of the noun or verb under consideration ended in an -st cluster, these two types of environments were eliminated from the tabulation of potential occurrences.

The term "black English" is here used to refer to a variety of English often spoken by lower socioeconomic group black people. Not all black people speak black English any more than all white people speak a standard variety of English.

In tabulating potential multiple negation constructions, every incidence of a negative sentence occurring with pronoun, determiner or adverb was counted. Excluded from the tabulations were instances in which negation of a preverbal auxiliary preceded by a negative indefinite was possible. This procedure for analyzing incidence of multiple negation was essentially the same one used in the other studies cited in this report.

This is not to say that deleting the suffix here is not disadvantageous in other respects. A child using such forms in school is likely to be the object of censure by teachers who hear them used. If teachers could be shown that this and other socially stigmatized forms are in most cases every bit as effective and efficient for communication as the socially approved forms, then they may be less likely to stigmatize children for using them.

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The Elementary Pupil as Textbook Consumer

Walter Holden

We all have little games we play to convince kids that school is important. One of the favorite tricks is to say that school is real, like life itself. This game is often played in textbooks, especially in language arts textbooks. We people who work in language arts labor under other people's misconception that our chosen field is a hodgepodge of unrelated unrealities. This makes us defensive at times, but we should, instead, leap to the offense. Language is not removed from life: language is life. And like life, it is full of duty, full of sound and fury. It is always changing and yet ever the same. Language is our dream and our incurable disease.

Teaching language is hard and demanding. To twist a speech from Dickens, "Teaching language can be one demd horrid grind." Conversely, it can be rewarding and uplifting. Language arts is too much—and at the same time—too little. It is all of communication, nonverbal as well as verbal. It begins with basic skills like handwriting and spelling and capitalization, and expands to encompass the whole of linguistics—phonology, morphology, dialectology, all that mysterious band of ologies. It encompasses words and sentence, rhymes and sonnets, books and newspapers, radio and TV, and all that pervasive band of media. It runs the gamut from the meaningful meaninglessness of "Good morning, how are you?" to the meaningless doublespeak of every government's gobbledygook. It's that internal machine that we can't turn off, even when we're asleep.

No net seems wide enough to pin language arts down for an answer to the question "What do I do on Monday morning?" The study of language looks like too big a bite to be swallowed along with new math, new science, and new social studies, and then to be regurgitated by a teacher who also must perform as evaluator, umpire, bookkeeper, money-changer, watchdog, zipper-upper, and all-around good guy or good gal.

What counts? My heresy, as a textbook editor, holds that language arts is indeed too huge and amorphous a study for the elementary teacher and the elementary pupil. But language skills is not. Language skills are usually divided into four areas: reading, writing, speaking, listening. Since language grows and changes and winds back on itself, any breakdown of the skills can be deceptive. No language skill can be truly isolated. We read writing and we write reading; we listen to speakers and we speak to listeners. Our earliest experiences with reading come from listening to someone speak words written by yet another someone.

I see two main hurdles to teaching language skills successfully. First, the separation of reading as a lone subject. Emphasis on reading skills is not wrong by any standard: literacy is the sole foundation of the structured knowledge required to live in the world today. But removal of reading from the language arts curriculum kicks one leg out from under the chair, leaving the three remaining legs tottering.

Even worse, in many curriculums the skills of speaking and listening—especially listening—are ignored or paid only lip service. In part, this treatment results from misinterpreting the linguistic discovery that children come to school capable of using and understanding complicated sentence structures. As Paul Roberts wrote, somewhat defensively perhaps, "When we present the grammar of a language to people who already speak the language, we run into a very serious initial problem."

Because results have fallen below the expectations aroused by Roberts and other linguists, many educators proclaim that teaching syntactic structure not only wastes school time but even warps young minds.

The anti-scientific attitude has led, in some schools, to an abandonment of organized efforts to teach the skills of speaking and listening. Instead, many teach language as a series of what they call learning experiences. This experiential philosophy compares to a football philosophy that if you carry the ball often enough you will run up a season's total of 2,000 yards, or to a baseball philosophy that if you swing the bat enough times you will hit 715 home runs.

The fact that all children speak and listen does not mean they are automatically O.J. Simpsons of speech or Henry Aarons of listening. Listening appears more difficult to teach than speaking does. Teachers sometimes complain that children just won't listen. And children sometimes complain that teachers just don't listen. Listening takes more than an ear and a brain. Listening is a skill demanding the desire to know, patience, submergence of ego, uncritical acceptance of the strengths and shortcomings of others, and the ability to synthesize new bits of intelligence sometimes in conflict with long-held and deep-felt beliefs.

Listening cannot be taught incidentally; it must be taught intentionally. We might take our byword here from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who began his most famous poem with the words "Listen, my children, and you shall hear. . . ."

Speaking is the flipside of listening. Despite the truism that God gave us two ears and but one mouth, a lot more talking goes on than listening. Much of the fault lies with us talkers, who, all too often, are talking to ourselves, for ourselves, and of ourselves. We should teach young speakers audience awareness. To be heard—really heard—you must involve your listener. The successful conversationalist, the per-

suasive speaker, constantly asks himself not "What's in it for me?" but "What's in it for him?" "What's in it for her?" "What's in it for them?"

Although children come to school with some ability to speak and listen, they come unable to read and write. From the beginning, the school must develop these skills. Teaching reading has generated much concern, but teaching writing is not only more difficult; it may be more important.

Writing, a skill built of many skills, demands coordination and concentration of mental faculties. This skill cuts across all the learning domains—cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. From the prosaic essentials of handwriting, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, writing moves to the high cerebration that results in Joyce Carol Oates' fiction, Robert Frost's poetry, and Shakespeare's drama.

Obviously, there is not a Frost or an Oates in every first grade class nor a Shakespeare in every school. No one claims that the right teaching of the right materials will generate genius. Still, we need not resign ourselves to generating only mediocrity.

Our first task begins in the primary grades: early and careful attention to the basic skills of manuscript and cursory handwriting, sound/letter regularities, recognition and replication of "sight words," all the mechanical skills without which the higher skills aren't worth peanuts.

At the same time children should be learning the rudiments of logic, or thinking skills: categorizing, sequencing, analyzing, synthesizing, conceptualizing, and developing analogies from sensory experiences. Setting five-year-olds to work fitting blocks of different shapes into matching holes doesn't seem like much, but it may—it just may—help to prevent them as adults from trying to fit square pegs into round holes.

A recent journal article discussed the prevalence of the so-called "fourth-grade slump," a phenomenon often noted and deplored. Why do so many kids at that level turn off their curiosity and their creativity? It may be that fourth grade is a watershed of learning, especially in the language arts. Children should by then have mastered the basic language skills. Fourth graders without these skills find themselves behind their classmates and behind their own felt expectations; and, worst of all, they don't know why. Semi-literate and baffled, they slip further behind every day. "Social promotion" only increases their ineptitude and frustration.

Assuming that children have mastered the mechanics of writing by the end of Grade three, what can we do to help them continue their advance toward linguistic maturity? We know the futility of simply dishing out more of the same. We can, if we carefully avoid the notion that doing is learning, provide for them occasions to write and to make their writing experiences valuable to themselves and to others. We can teach them to respect their own efforts and to want to produce writing of

greater maturity. Many teachers have found that children, given the time and the reason, will improve their own writing and each other's writing so that the teacher deals not with a pile of first drafts, but with a selection of final drafts.

We can sequence our language programs so that children will be continually exposed to better and more demanding reading experiences, wider and more thought-provoking language study. Kids, on their own, play with words and work with words. Whether we incorporate their language interest into our textbooks and into their classwork, they are—if only in hit-or-miss fashion—aware of the power of semantics, the ring of the right word, the pleasure of rhyme and alliteration, the pervasiveness of metaphor. A pupil will know that "Hammering Henry" signifies Henry Aaron. The pupil may, without analyzing the figure being used, apply the same epithet to Henry Kissinger—metaphor and alliteration on one tether and leading to new insight.

We can improve pupils' ability to write more maturely by sequencing transformational grammar insights. We know that this has already been done—by Hunt, O'Donnell, O'Hare, Cooper, and others. The method, called sentence combining, employs almost none of the linguistic and mathematic apparatus used in those abortive efforts at creating a nation of little linguists. We know without scientific proof that sixth graders, on the average, write better sentences and tighter paragraphs than fourth graders, and the professionals write more maturely than high school students. By analyzing examples of writing at various levels, linguists have discovered that in addition to the expected semantic, or content differences, there are syntactic differences that also typify the various levels of writing and, further, that these syntactic structures can be arranged in a hierarchy and taught in a sequence. The transformational grammar comes into sentence combining as the source of these sentence structures. In sentence combining, pupils work with only a model and sets of sentences that they combine following that model. As they master increasingly complex models, they meld sentences into paragraphs and take apart other paragraphs to recover the base sentences. Pupils carry these new sentence structures over to their own writing so that—for example—fourth graders use structures they would not normally use until sixth grade; and similar dramatic gains follow all up the line. These gains are not pious projections but results observed scientifically.

Of the four skill areas, I have skirted reading. Earlier I mentioned one reason for this skirting: reading generally has its own spot in the curriculum. Nevertheless, reading is a language skill and cannot be avoided in language arts textbooks. Even the most traditional composition and grammar series contain bits of professional poetry and prose, both as models and as springboards for discussion.

We must bow to reality and accept that reading is a separate subject, and will continue to be so for some time. Beyond the teaching of basic skills, however, reading melds into the general area of language study.

Somewhere along the line reading skills become "thinking" skills and reading arts become literature, a well-accepted leg of the NCTE tripod of composition, language study, and literature. The NCTE applied this tripod more to secondary than to elementary grades, but who can say where reading ends and literature begins? Since most of us acknowledge literature as the highest expression of language, a language program without literary selections is like a man without a head—or, if that metaphor seems too hyperbolic, a piano without a keyboard.

Before I conclude, I'd like to say a few words on performance objectives, evaluation, and testing. Like you, I sometimes wish these concerns would take wing and fly away. They seem antithetical to the classic picture of education as Mark Hopkins on one end of the log and the student on the other.

Of course these concerns will not go away—and, in truth, they should not. The notions behind performance objectives and evaluation—that we should know where we want to go and if we have arrived—can't be denied. Half of the states already have legislation requiring evaluation. So, even if we do try to deny it, we are whistling into the wind. This situation demands much from all of us in school work, from publishers as well as from teachers. We who prepare textbook programs must, in light of this new interest, provide valid objectives and evaluation. This concern will be reflected in most future language arts series.

There will still be open classrooms and teachers who do not want—and are not bound by—a rigid structure of objectives and evaluation. Naturally, publishers will continue to provide programs for these teachers. Some schools are also into non-grading and non-testing, but these trends run counter to the demands by lay people as well as educators for objectives and evaluation. These demands, arising both within and outside the profession, result from the twin phenomena of universities turning away our graduates as unable to handle college work and of employers turning them down as unqualified. We see national attention focused on the case of the City of San Francisco being sued by a high school graduate whose fifth-grade reading level has prevented him from getting a decent job.

Students, their parents, and communities no longer accept the notion that school is a place to keep kids off the street rather than a place to educate them. I doubt if they ever did accept the notion, any more than you as teachers did; but now they have become vocal in their protests against non-education. These protests may create short-term problems, but in the long run they can only improve our schools, making them better places for learning and for teaching.

Most series featuring objectives will also incorporate a testing program meshing with performance objectives, wherever these objectives are testable. Language arts teachers—more, perhaps, than other teachers—deal with many objectives that are not readily broken down

into learning bits for teaching and testing. It is difficult—if not impossible—to observe and test affective domain objectives like developing appreciations and attitudes. This does not mean that we should not state these as objectives, but only that we should distinguish between objectives that are immediately testable and those that are not. Whatever textbook publishers do and state officials say, the problems remain essentially local and will be solved on the local level.

What can the elementary language arts teacher do, bombarded with new curriculums in this and other areas and with shifting and ever more demanding standards?

We can start by looking at what teachers are doing now. Most teachers are following a textbook program. Recent figures indicate that over 90% of classroom programs are taught from a basic text, with or without supplementary materials of various kinds. Textbook publishers don't object to that, of course. Teachers—especially in elementary schools—have not the time to do otherwise. The burden, therefore, is on publishers, editors, and authors of textbooks. Most textbook authors, incidentally, are school people like yourselves, generally the most thoughtful and hard-working school people, leaders in our profession.

All teachers have the right to influence the choice of textbooks and they have the duty to examine all available programs to find what is best for their own pupils. If you find your program inferior, complain. Gripe to every administrative person who will lend an ear. Write to publishers and tell them what's wrong with their books. Publishers not only listen and react; they almost always answer letters from users. Meanwhile, even under your terrifying time pressures, supplement any program with materials from other programs, from periodicals and other media sources, from other teachers, from your own head. The teacher is her own—or his own—best friend and chief resource. The pupils as a textbook consumer relies on the most significant medium of all—the alert, responsible, and responsive teacher.

Houghton Mifflin Company
Boston, Massachusetts

EMPHASIS: COMPOSITION

Wallace Stevens once observed: "Poetry is a response to the daily necessity of getting the world right."[1] Although the emphasis in this issue of *The English Record* is specifically composition and not poetry, Stevens' sage aphorism nonetheless holds since both forms of discourse take root and grow within the human imagination. The language a man possesses and controls, be he poet or business executive, largely determines his capacity to experience the many possibilities of human life. The major problem for the teacher of composition is to provide the best conditions and tools with which students may pursue this noble enterprise. The teacher must exhort students to enlist in their own self-development while at the same time demonstrating to them that writing is one of many dimensions of what it means to be alive. Through language the student can then define his continually changing truth and lay out that truth in such conventional categories as grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Most of the articles in this section present composing as a process of creating, sustaining, and enlarging the student's verbal-imaginative realm and happily avoid treating composition as a dull topic that must be "covered" for a six week grading period. And, indeed, this is only right since the major poets of the Twentieth century, Pound, Eliot, Stevens, Williams, and Yeats all entered into the process of language itself to test the authenticity of their vision of reality against the facts. They found, as students find, that one's integrity is inescapably bound to the daily necessity of finding the words which get the world right. While the task is at times very trying, the reward of accurately defining one's self in an era which regularly rewards lying and hypocrisy can become for both student and teacher a work of joy and fulfillment.

Patrick Meanor SUNY, Oneonta

[1] Wallace Stevens, **Opus Posthumous**, ed. Samuel French Morse, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), p. 176.

Writing in the Reading Class

Marion Bossart

As a secondary remedial reading teacher one of the biggest problems I encounter is the low self-esteem of my students. Students who have repeatedly failed in the area of language arts have little or no motivation to try again. Progress, they know, is slow and, many feel, not worth the effort. These students deserve a taste of success. They need to play a more active role in class and not just become receptacles into which lines of print are poured and responses extracted. On the supposition that my students would become more interested in reading if they could successfully write, I decided to give them a series of short, well-structured creative writing assignments. While I was considering ways to introduce these assignments, another reading teacher suggested that my class put together a set of writings for the remedial reading class at the elementary level. The idea was an excellent one. My class was not adverse to the plan, but they seemed skeptical that such a project would come to completion. However, as they saw their writing after I had edited and dittoed it, they became increasingly enthusiastic and willing to write. As we read in a certain mode of literature, they completed a number of writing assignments in the same mode. James Moffett's *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1973) provided a general structure for assignments in dramatic dialogue and autobiography. Ideas for writing poetry were culled from Kenneth Koch's *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams* (Random House, 1971).

In constructing minimal situations for dramatic dialogue, I found that current events offered a variety of interesting topics. For example, after the Bobby Riggs vs. Billie Jean King extravaganza, I asked the students to write a conversation between the two players when they happen to meet in the locker room after the game. Most of the resulting pieces were amusing and imaginative. Part of one runs as follows:

Bobby (Runs up to Billie): Well Billie, you won and I lost.

Billie: It's not a matter of winning and losing.

Bobby: Well, what is it?

Billie: It's how you play the game.

Bobby: You think you're so smart, you were out there practicing . . .

Billie: Yeah, while you were out there bragging to the world about how you were going to beat me, I was practicing.

Bobby: You think you're cool, but I got news for you.

Billie: Well, I'm sort of glad I won because it proves that men aren't always what they say they are.

Bobby: Do you think you could play another man who isn't quite as old as I?

Billie: Yes, I would play. But I play for pleasure not to see who is going to beat whom.

(Bobby looks up at the ceiling . . . .)

At the time Vice President Agnew was the subject of hot controversy, I asked the class to write a dialogue between Nixon and Agnew as they met in the privacy of Nixon's Oval Office. One boy composed the following prophetic piece:

Nixon: What the hell were you trying to prove, and now they have caught you. How do you think you're going to get out of this, you meathead?

Agnew: I don't know.

Nixon: Let me tell you this. If they convict you, ain't nobody gonna want to know you, not even me. You hear me?

Agnew: Yes . . . But I didn't do all those things they said I did.

Nixon: The hell you didn't.

Agnew: So what, we all got to go sometime.

While reading biographies and autobiographies, the students wrote short pieces about events in their own lives. In a piece entitled "A Memorable Experience" one student wrote about a near encounter with death:

One day last summer a bunch of kids were riding their bikes over a ramp. I was just riding around on my bike, so I thought I'd try it. There were some kids who were afraid to go over it. I said, "Watch me and I'll show you how to do it." Well, I showed them all right. My chain got caught on a brick and I was thrown off. The next thing I knew, I was in the hospital, but I didn't know where I was. I was in another world. I ended up with a head concussion. The doctor came in and checked on me once in awhile. The nurses took my pulse and blood pressure about every hour. Well, I was in the hospital for over a week and almost died, but I knew everyone wanted me to live, so I didn't die. It was a very unhappy experience for me.

Another boy wrote of his difficulties in making friends at a new school:

When I was in fifth grade, I beat up dudes cause they called me names, and I didn't like that. So this kid named Frank, just because I was new in school, called me a name, so I punched him in the mouth. He swung and I ducked and came up hitting him in the chin. Then after the fight, we became friends. In a couple of days we became good friends. He was such a good friend that he treated me to a soda, and I treated him to a punch in the mouth, cause he thought he could beat me in that earlier fight. Then he got up. "What you do that for?" He said. I said, "Cause you think you can beat me." Then he said, "Oh man, I was only kidding." Then we became friends again.

The poetry assignments brought perhaps the most imaginative results. The assignments from *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams*, which were initially used with grade school pupils, worked very well with my high

school students. They much enjoyed writing and then reading aloud what they had written. I followed the general sequence outlined in Koch's book and found that the students became increasingly fluent in this mode. I started with "I wish" poems, involving the entire class by having each student orally supply one line. One class of all boys created the following poem. Each line was to contain a reference to a place and an animal:

> I wish I were in Birmingham riding on a giraffe.
> I wish I were in New York which reminds me of trout.
> I wish I were in California hunting deer.
> I wish I were in Florida driving a dolphin.
> I wish I were in Arizona riding a boa constrictor.
> I wish I lived in Africa and I was fishing for bass.
> I wish I were a bear, so I could sleep all winter in a cave in Alaska.
> I wish I were in Missouri riding on a mouse.

The assignment to write "lies," one of the last given in the poetry mode, evoked particularly good results. For some students it seemed to provide a vehicle for emotional catharsis. A boy who had been arrested and given three months' probation for aiding and abetting a streaker wrote:

> Streaking is good, but it is not fun. It is fun when you get caught by a sheriff, and it's real exciting when you have to spend ten days in jail.

An especially boy-conscious girl wrote:

> I'm just like Raquel Welch. My measurements are 36-24-36. I've got blond hair and big blue eyes. I weigh 107 and my height is 5'7". I'm going out with Joe Namath. We're always having fun together. He just bought me a few minks last week. This week I will get a new 1974 Chevy Corvette.

Animal, food, and color imagery used in earlier pieces were effectively used by some students to embellish their lies, as in this fantastic fib:

> I have a purple cat that married a green dog. I have black toes that talk to my green dog. The glasses that my cat wears are very big and he can't see out of them. I live in a castle with lots of luxuries. My favorite thing is a blue-green, upside down, yellow water fountain. I am a doctor who flies through the air making telephone calls. I am a purple people-eater who eats crabs for lunch and lobster for dessert and hates people. I can't wait to find a blue dress to wear on my eight legs.

A Puerto Rican girl, in one of her first sustained attempts to write in English, incorporated the elements of fire and water to tell the following dramatic lie:

> I have a dog that is an apple, and a cat that is a cherry, and a turkey that is eight feet tall. The turkey was born in a fire with water in his eyes and nose. The mother of my cat is a snake. The elephant goes to school in a carriage. The tree teaches the students and the tree knows many different languages. He talks to my book. My pencil walks to school every day. The chair is an astronaut and the table is the sky. The people are flames. The houses are papers. The butterfly swims in the sea every day.

Writing to music was one of the most popular assignments. Students were given a chance to associate freely to various instrumental

selections. Elton John's "Four Moods" from the soundtrack of the movie *Friends* proved to be a good stimulus for this kind of writing. Most of the students responded to the changing tone of the music although they were unaware that the composer intended to express distinct moods. Again some of the students reacted in a highly personal, emotional way. One girl wrote:

> Sadness. Makes me feel sad, alone in the world, no one cares about me. People passing by not paying any attention to me, going about their business. Things are happening every day. People shooting each other. Mysteries. Someone coming upstairs trying to scare me—frighten me. I feel like I want to hide from the rest of the world. . . Happiness. At a dance with some nice boy having a good time. Makes me feel real happy. I'm going to some far off place where all is good, nothing really happens. Birds always singing, trees blowing softly in the background.

Another girl who had experienced a violent fight with her fiance' in front of the school two days prior to the assignment wrote:

> Watching an orchestra.
> Sounds like you're watching T.V. and something scary is going to happen.
> The girl is running and the guy is running after her.
> She's crying because he caught her, but she kills him.
> He's dying slow.
> She's screaming.
> Her loved one saves her.
> Something just happened.
> Happy song.
> He's telling his girl to go with him.

A third girl related a personal experience which had been frightening for her. She, too, reacted to the mood change of the music:

> It reminds me of the time I got lost at a beach and couldn't find my way back to the trailer park. My Dad had to go looking for me. It was getting dark and gloomy. It scared me, because I didn't know what was going to happen next or anything. It was getting late and I was scared. I didn't know which way to go. I couldn't find my way back to the camp. I heard a noise and it scared me more. I remember going one way and another. Finally, I found my way back and everything was all right. I was glad to be back there again. Be back.

For another student the music brought to mind a bad dream with a happy ending:

> It reminds me of a dream I had of a boy who everyone hated and who was ugly. Then he made some medicine that made him into a handsome boy. But then it wore off; then he took a big jug and drank the whole thing. He became handsome for the rest of his life.

In less personal responses several students used colorful imagery to capture the movement and drama of the music:

> In the city of Batavia
> I see pretty red, green, and yellow
> When the leaves start to fall in fall.
> One by one they fall faster and faster
> Until they have all fallen off the tree.

And the people take them up
And take and take and take
Until there are none left.
The winter is here.

Once more harkening back to earlier poetry assignments, some students made use of animals, months, places, and colors to express their reactions to the music:

Dallas where the yellow sun comes up in June.
And where it is summer and all the birds are flying in the air.
And the beautiful sounds of the animals.
And the sound of traffic

Now it sounds like a sad song
That was made for two people
Who had something bad happening to them.
Maybe death or loneliness.

Editing the student pieces was an arduous task. I tried various ways to involve the students in the process. At first, they exchanged papers and tried to correct the most obvious, basic mistakes; however, a good number of students were unable to distinguish what was correct from what was incorrect. Some made additions or deletions where none were called for. Further, many papers were riddled with mechanical errors, making them trials for even the most practiced eye. I also tried correcting the papers and handing them back to be recopied. This method, however, put too much emphasis on what was wrong with the writing. It was a real discouragement to the less capable students to have to acknowledge so many mechanical errors. The most fruitful approach I used was to project by means of an overhead projector one or two papers (with the student's name covered) and have the class respond with editing suggestions. I followed this by pointing out corrections they had missed. At all times I stressed that the purpose of this exercise was not to make negative remarks about someone's paper, but to make each paper as clear and readable as possible. Ultimately, I had to edit carefully all of the papers, because the students lacked the skill to do an efficient job. In editing I attempted to stay as close as possible to the original wording and content while preserving continuity and excising mistakes. For some papers editing was a relatively easy process; for others it was difficult. It was surprising to find that some of the mechanically poorest papers were the best in terms of originality and content. The following paper in its unedited and edited forms is an example. Unedited it read:

I am a newspaper. A man walk up to the new stand and Brote my for 25¢ and he went to the pary and he start to read my He put me down at the end of the bench and he put his head in me he fell a sleep. Two hours later a drank cane by he spilled his drink in my a got drank then is started to rain I gat wet I flow under a tree it took my theree days to dry aut it man cane and put me in it can we got to this place and he state me on fire.

Edited it reads as follows:

I am a newspaper. A man walked up to the newsstand and bought me for 25¢. Then he went to the park and he started to read me. He put me down at the end of the bench and

put his head on me. He fell asleep. Two hours later, a drunk came by. He spilled his drink on me. I got drunk. Then it started to rain. I got wet, I blew under a tree. It took me three days to dry out. A man came and put me in a trash can. We got to a place and he started me on fire.

Generally, the students who had very poor reading skills also demonstrated very poor writing skills. Some of these same students, however, were among the most original.

As of yet, only some of the dramatic dialogues have been used as reading material at the elementary level. They were very favorably received. The content and vocabulary of these short plays were well suited for small group reading. The children were flattered that older students had written for them while the girl who had written the plays was gratified and proud that they were accepted with such enthusiasm. I anticipate that the finished book of writings will be just as well received as were the plays.

I have heard many teachers express the thought that it is more important for low achievers to learn to read than it is for them to learn to write. It would seem more profitable not to treat reading and writing as separate entities but, instead, to help students see the relationship between the two processes. It is probable that instruction in one area reinforces and enhances instruction in the other. Although I have not determined whether the time and effort spent on writing in my class has had positive measureable effects on reading, I have observed a favorable change in attitude toward the reading class. For some the writing project offered an avenue for emotional release, for some a welcomed chance to succeed in language arts, and for all a boost in self-esteem: A recognition that they as individuals have something valuable and interesting to say.

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A Sequence of Writing: A Composition Elective for Juniors and Seniors

Thomas F. Callaghan

Introduction

Although English teachers are used to writing and often write well themselves, there is probably no area of English instruction with which they are less comfortable than that of teaching writing. Few teachers have ever been exposed to a workable theory of composition instruction. James Moffett's *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968) and *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968) contain such a theory. His philosophy of how children learn to use language and his practical suggestions for teaching have significantly influenced my teaching style. Moffett argues that English is a skill to be learned, not a body of knowledge to be memorized. Like a musician learning to play an instrument, the student learns writing skills by practice. Yet, teachers sometimes do not seem to be aware of this basic fact. Walk around almost any school and observe. In many classrooms the teachers will be doing most of the talking.

Language involves a speaker, a listener, and a subject. The relationships of the speaker to his listener and his subject are the basis of Moffett's curriculum. The student learns to use language by experiencing all the various relationships that exist. He begins with situations that are closest to the speaker and moves to situations that are successively more removed and abstract. In doing this sequence of tasks, the student understands more fully what is involved at each stage and how to relate each stage to the others. He becomes aware of how he and others communicate.

In an ideal teaching situation speaking, writing, listening, and reading—the basic forms of discourse—are given equal emphasis. Traditionally, composition courses involve a lot of writing and only a little speaking, listening, and reading. I partially solve this problem through strong emphasis on group work. Students are given more time to talk and listen. In their groups they discuss literature, plan projects, and talk over specific writing assignments. In the process they are interacting, using language, and learning from each other. More importantly, the groups serve as sources of feedback for student papers. Every paper a student writes is discussed by his peers. Each member of the group must sign the paper at the bottom to signify that he has read the

paper and commented on it. The paper then goes into an individual folder after optional revision. I discuss the student's folder with him from time to time. What the student loses in teacher-contact time is more than made up by the increased student-contact time; the immense quantity of feedback more than makes up for the quality that may be lost. Moreover, five minutes of oral one-to-one commentary on a student's paper is probably more valuable than a long handwritten comment.

The groups need to be trained to work together. Therefore, during the first few weeks of school and from time to time subsequently, the groups are involved in various kinds of games which develop self-confidence and trust. The games are not a waste of time and actually save time later on when the groups have learned to operate effectively. Although Moffett's curriculum is group- and student-centered in the sense that the student learns by doing, what is done is very carefully controlled by the teacher. The teacher's role in this sense is very traditional.

Freely picking and choosing from the kinds of writing tasks suggested by Moffett, I have developed specific writing tasks which are more or less sequential and fit the needs of my particular course. Toward the end of the paper I will briefly discuss the thorny areas of measurement, evaluation and the integration of literature into the writing program.

Dialogue

In real-life situations communication is generally through speech. Most speech is dialogue. Dialogue is extemporaneous and free flowing. It builds upon what has been said by the previous speaker. Dialogue is a very natural and comfortable place for a student to begin writing. It also forces him to be realistic, to define relationships, to compare and contrast characters, to be true to the idiolect of each character, to deal with conflicts, and perhaps to develop issues and make points. Dialogues can be either dramatic, emphasizing what happened, or socratic, emphasizing why it happened.

In dialogue students make up a minimal situation or I allow them to use one of my examples. In this type of writing as in all of the writing tasks, I prefer the students to use situations or topics based on their own first-hand experience because invariably their papers will be more vivid and creative. The dialogue situation should be as brief as possible and confined to one time and place. At first just two speakers are involved. A situation I often use to start the students thinking is as follows:
Situation: You have been out on a date with someone you've dated before. You arrive home at 4:00 A.M. Your mother is waiting for you.
Mother: "Where in the world have you been?"
You: "Well, it was like this . . . ."
As students gain confidence with two-speaker dialogue, I introduce three speakers in a situation like this:
Situation: You have just been in a car accident. The other driver and you have to report to the policeman at the scene.

Policeman: "All right, what happened?"
Other driver: "He's the one who did it."
You: "I did not . . . ."

In a drama course or an advanced composition course the dialogues can be expanded to short scripts and even complete plays. Sometimes a group will find a dialogue it really likes and will expand it as a group project.

While dramatic dialogue deals mainly with emotional and narrative aspects of dialogue, socratic dialogue introduces the more abstract aspects of values and reasons. Again, I begin with the two-person point of view and then move to the three-person point of view. The following situation illustrates the two-person point of view:
Situation: There was a protest march in your town. You went downtown just to watch from the sidelines. Suddenly tear gas bombs start popping and a policeman comes up and catches you by the collar.
Policeman: "All right, you're under arrest."
You: "Officer . . . ."
A typical three-person situation might involve some infraction of school rules:
Situation: You and your friend are standing in the lavatory. He is smoking but you are not. Just then a teacher walks in.
Teacher: "I want both of you to come with me to the principal."
Your friend: "What do you mean? We weren't smoking."
You: ". . . ."

An additional bonus in using the dialogue writing tasks is that the students very quickly learn from each other how to use quotation marks. A few years ago I spent days trying to teach the use of quotation marks and proper paragraphing with very little result. Yet, now the students learn them from each other in no time.

Monologue

Monologue is presented after dialogue because the listener does not interact verbally with the speaker, and accordingly it requires more independence and confidence on the part of the speaker or writer.

Dramatic monologue represents the outer voice of the speaker. There is still another person present, the listener who may even interact nonverbally with the speaker. Dramatic monologue forces the writer to indicate the listener's response in what the speaker says. A typical monologue contains a situation and then the monologue itself:
Situation: You have just been caught skipping class for the third time this month. You are in the assistant principal's office and he has just asked you what you have to say. Using "I" and speaking in your own voice, write down what you would say to him. He listens but does not talk. However, you may react to his gestures and facial expressions.

Interior monologue is more abstract. The listener is not another person. It is like thinking aloud or at least like talking to oneself. The

only feedback comes from within. As with all the writing tasks, situations which relate to students' lives are best:
Situation: There is someone in your class who you think is terrific. A dance is coming up and you have to get a date. You are planning to ask this person right after class. It is now the middle of class. Write down what is going through your mind as you rehearse what you are going to say.

Another useful type of interior monologue is to have students make up soliloquies for literary characters they have met in their reading. Literature is not dealt with specifically in this course. However, students have a repertoire of previous readings which can be most useful. Many of the writing tasks can and should be used with literature, for they can develop not only powers of expression but also understanding and appreciation of literature.

Narration

The narration of events is another aspect of writing which comes naturally to students. I begin with some observational assignments to sharpen the students' sense of detail, move to the first person of autobiography and finally shift to the more abstract and remote areas of biography and history. Order is usually imposed by the chain of events and the writer is left free to examine closely what he sees and what he remembers. I begin with observational visits rather than autobiography because the visits depend on more immediate perceptions.

In the usual observational assignment I send my students outside the class and instruct them to walk around the school or outside the building. They are to take notes on everything they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. The first time I give this assignment I ask the students just to observe things and ignore people. I suggest that they confine their observations to a limited area. In subsequent assignments I ask them to observe first one person and then several people. Finally, I ask them to observe several people and include a description of their immediate setting. The notes are revised and submitted as a paper after each visit. The purpose of these assignments is to sharpen observational skills using real rather than remembered objects.

The first truly narrative assignment is the autobiographical incident. Although the narrator is the writer, the task requires some objectivity, for the narrator is looking at himself. Yet, since the writer is the subject, the student knows quite a lot about his topic and accordingly writes with some confidence. An incident is a situation involving one time and place. As always, I encourage students to use their own incidents but one incident I often use for illustration is as follows:
Autobiography simply means writing about yourself. Writing in your normal way of speaking and using "I" tell about the time something very embarrassing happened to you.

The next assignments are autobiographical phases. A phase covers a longer period of time than an incident. It requires the writer to summarize incidents and tie them together. Thus a phase is a more abstract writing task and requires higher organizational skills. Students often write about phases they have gone through in school, their "high school phase" or their "middle school phase."

Then, following the format for the autobiographies, I assign biography and history. Each is successively more removed from the writer. Both move the subject from inside to outside but still allow the writer to appear in the narration. In the biographical and historical incidents the emphasis is upon what happens and the biographical and historical phases emphasize why it happens.

Typical assignments are as follows:

Biographical incident: Tell about something that happened to your best friend. You may be present at the scene but keep the focus of your paper on your friend. Use "he."

Biographical phase: Tell what happened to your brother or sister or close friend during a certain period of his life covering several months or years. Refer to yourself if necessary but keep your attention on the other person. Perhaps your sister was very sick . . . .

Historical incident: We have all attended classes that stick out in our memories. Pick such a class meeting and tell what happened. You are just another member of the class. Keep your attention on the entire class. Use "they."

Historical phase: You have been in many courses during your lifetime. Some of them you liked and some you hated. Probably most of the class felt the same way. Pick a rather noteworthy course and describe several incidents that happened which made the course good or bad. Keep the focus on the entire class, not you.

Reporting

The reporting assignments require a high level of abstraction because they involve not only observable phenomena but also opinions and attitudes. Reporting requires a great amount of summary and synthesis and therefore follows the narrative sequence. A few observational visit assignments involving both people and settings generally suffice to focus the students' attention on observable phenomena once more. Sometimes I ask the students to write these papers as newspaper stories.

The interview requires the students to record faithfully whatever is spoken and also to reproduce the personality of the speaker. This particular assignment has produced some interesting papers:

Interview: Interview a neighbor on your street. Try to find out how he feels about today's politics. Take notes of what he says, what your impressions are, and the place where the interview occurred. Later write an account of your interview. Your aim is to report not only what the person had to say but also the impression he made on you.

The survey assignment is identical to the interview except that several people are interviewed. The assignment requires the student to summarize and organize several different sets of statements and opinions. Students have recently been very interested in the smoking rules and many students have taken some very good surveys of teacher and student opinions on the smoking rules.

The final assignment of the recording sequence brings the student to exposition. Since the recording sequence often leads to group and class newspapers or journals, editorials naturally come up. In the editorial assignments students are asked to state an opinion on any subject and support that assertion with as many facts and incidents as they can.

Exposition

At a very high level of abstraction are generalization and theory. Both demand logical and rhetorical skills, which all of the previous writing tasks have been building. Unfortunately, most writing programs begin with exposition rather than end with it.

In generalization the student is asked to work with several incidents that have something in common, some unifying theme. No longer can he rely on time or someone else to order his material. He has to find the order in the material itself.
For example:
Generalization: You have been in school for a number of years. You have had plenty of time to observe teachers. Make some general statement about teachers and use a number of examples to illustrate your statement.

Finally generalizations are combined into a theory. The paper is a kind of syllogism. Each generalization has to be supported by examples or facts and the final theory has to be fully developed and explained. This type of assignment is very traditional and needs little elaboration. However, many students did submit theories based on the interactions of teenagers and adults in society.

Summary

The sequence of writing tasks in this course moves from the very concrete dialogue to the very abstract theory. Group situations and one-to-one conferences provide the necessary interaction and feedback. Literature is introduced only incidentally and only by the student. Although an advanced composition course could very profitably correlate the writing tasks with literature, there is not time for this in the regular course. Because the tasks draw on students' personal experiences and values, their papers are almost always creative. In fact, they can become very personal. I do not grade the papers; instead, I write a few positive comments on them to guide my discussion of the paper with the student. A mid-semester grade and a final grade are determined in a

teacher-student conference. General guidelines for grades are established by a contract-type system.

I have found that students do not need negative comments. When the subject of writing is approached in a coach-player relationship rather than in an examiner-examinee atmosphere, students become more interested in writing and less interested in a grade. Reading papers becomes interesting and often fun. Composition becomes a course one can enjoy teaching.

East Aurora High School
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MONOGRAPH NUMBER TWELVE

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An Inquiry into the Composing Process

Arthur G. Hale

The teaching of writing is most likely the main concern and major apprehension of the majority of secondary school English teachers. At least it should be of major concern; for when all else is pushed aside, what are English teachers really after but authentic communication, especially in the written form? There is more than ample professional material available, in the form of textbooks, workbooks, writing program kits, etc., designed obstensibly to aid the teacher in guiding his students toward attaining an ability in composing characterized by style, effectiveness, and creativity. We have materials, we have methods, and we can examine composition from various critical viewpoints; yet, the truth remains that we know very little about the composing process itself. The key word here is process, and the processes in question are those involved in the process of human symbolization. If, like James Moffett, we conceive of language as a symbol system and the manipulation of that symbol system as process, then crucial questions arise concerning the nature and operation of the symbolizing process expressed both as speech and as writing. In *Teaching The Universe of Discourse* Moffett tells us that, "the most natural assumption about teaching any symbol system should be that the student employ his time using that system in every realistic way that it can be used, not that he analyze it or study it as an object."[1] The implication is, of course, that English is not content but process, and only by having the student use his language operationally in action, can he realize all the symbolizing strategies that he may command and communicate with. Yet, again, how can we, as teachers, hope to adequately teach composition if we do not comprehend all the variables that effect and represent the composing process itself? Indeed, so little has been known about the process of composing that, rather than teach writing, teachers have traditionally substituted grammar exercises, paragraph writing, literary analysis, or any number of other preoccupations. English teachers tend to avoid direct involvement in something so uncontrollable and difficult as the teaching of composition.

For these and for other reasons I initiated the following inquiry into the process of composing. What follows is a description of the method of inquiry, the results gained, and what implications may be realized for us as teachers of English.

There are a number of investigative methodologies that one may call upon in order to construct an inquiry into writing process. However, it should be made clear at the outset that the method of research utilized in this study is by no means original, nor was it intend-

ed to be so. An explanation is necessary. In 1971, the National Council of Teachers of English published an important and influential research report written by Janet Emig. Titled, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, Emig's report relates her investigation via the case study inquiry approach into the nature and operation of the symbolizing process we call writing. Her study represents a meaningful departure from customary avenues of analysis used to investigate the process of composing. In her introduction she writes, ". . . . the writer wishes to reiterate what she believes are the values of this study. First, it represents a unique effort to utilize case studies for eliciting data about how students behave as they write. An experiment in capturing a process in process, the study provides certain kinds of data—humanistic data—that other kinds of inquiries into composition have not yet elicited. Perhaps its chief value is its steady assumption that persons rather than mechanisms compose."[2] At this point I will review some of the main points expressed in Professor Emig's study and attempt to clarify "case study".

Professor Emig uses apt language in describing the case study as an attempt to capture "process in process." We have already found that composing is a process. It follows that any research method that studies the writing process in operation is in actuality viewing the act of symbolization dynamically rather than as static fragmented data, to be sorted and analyzed in piecemeal fashion after the act of writing. People write and think by process, and to authentically study these processes one must examine them in activity and operation. Succinctly, the case study approach demands that one be concerned with the act and not with the result. Most often, English teachers are aware only of the result of writing, the completed composition, when they should also be concerned with the act of writing itself. For it goes without saying that the degree of or lack of degree of control of the process determines the quality of the result or product. Better writing depends on better control and understanding of the processes utilized to produce the final composition.

With the stated aim above in mind, in this investigation I endeavored to replicate Ms. Emig's study quite closely, deviating only in scale and emphasis. Where Professor Emig studied the composing processes of eight senior high school students, both boys and girls, I focused on one student, a seventh grade boy. Ms. Emig met with each student four times, but I met with my subject seven times.

I urge those interested in learning more about the process of writing and the case study approach to analyzing the composing process to read Professor Emig's book. Perhaps the real value of my own study is that it will persuade others interested in understanding the process of composing to read Ms. Emig's work and, better yet, to initiate a case study of their own into the nature and operation of writing as a central process of human symbolization.

The design of my study is quite simple. A single seventh grade boy was asked to participate voluntarily in the study, which was briefly ex-

plained to him. The investigator met with the subject seven times, usually a week apart, during which the subject was asked to compose aloud or orally answer questions related to writing done by him at home for the study. The major tool used in the study was a tape recorder which operated continuously during any session. Perhaps I should say a few words concerning composing aloud. The premise underlying having the subject compose aloud as a mechanism of the inquiry is that in composing aloud the student will somehow vocally reproduce his inner, normally silent processes of symbolization. Thus, the composing process becomes reachable by having the subject vocalize what usually only he would be capable of realizing.

The subject was asked to compose several different kinds of discourse in both the reflexive and extensive modes. Emig tells us that, "The reflexive mode is defined here as the mode that focuses upon the writer's thoughts and feelings concerning his experiences; the chief audience is the writer himself; the domain explored is often the affective; the style is tentative, personal and exploratory. The extensive mode is defined here as the mode that focuses upon the writer's conveying a message or a communication to another; the domain explored is usually the cognitive; the style is assured, impersonal and often reportorial."[3]

Kinds of writing done by the subject in the study include narration, dialogue, poetry and poetry interpretation, autobiographical incident, fiction, description, exposition, diary entry, and short story. In addition, many pieces of writing done for school English assignments were examined and some pieces of writing done when the subject was younger were available. Some discussion of the mode of analysis utilized in examining these pieces of writing is perhaps necessary. Emig states clearly that underlying this type of approach to understanding the composing process is the premise that there, " . . . . are elements, moments, and stages within the composing process which can be distinguished and characterized in some detail."[4] The elements and stages that Professor Emig refers to are comprised of various questions, context factors, and points in the composing process, all related to the totality of experience that precedes and resides in the process of writing. A detailed examination of the dimensions of the composing process is not possible here; however, a limited listing of the major aspects of the process is useful as background to my case report:

I. CONTEXT—The point of departure of the investigation is an examination of the context of composing which includes such factors as community, family, school and the writing history of the subject.

II. NATURE OF STIMULUS—The nature of the writing stimuli which includes the registers, i.e. the field, the mode, and tenor of the piece of discourse and the impetus for writing.

III. PREWRITING and IV. PLANNING—Emig clarifies these two possible precursive elements to the composing process. She writes, "Prewriting is that part of the composing process that extends from the time a writer begins to perceive selectively certain features of his inner and/or outer environment with a view to writing about

them—usually at the instigation of a stimulus—to the time when he first puts words or phrases on paper elucidating that perception.

Planning refers to any oral and written establishment of elements and parameters before or during a discursive formulation. Prewriting occurs but once in a writing process; planning can occur many times."[5]

V. STARTING—Apparent ease or difficulty of beginning writing. Choice of first elements, words, or ideas. Reasons for beginning. Differences in starting between self-sponsored and other-sponsored writing.

VI. COMPOSING ALOUD—An analysis of the subject's observed behavior while composing aloud.

VII. REFORMULATION—Correcting, revising, rewriting and various transforming operations.

VIII. STOPPING and CONTEMPLATION OF PRODUCT—Apparent ease or difficulty of stopping writing. Final elements, words or ideas. Reasons for stopping. Length and nature of contemplation of produced writing. Differences in stopping and contemplation of product between self-sponsored and other-sponsored writing.

IX. TEACHER INFLUENCE—Evaluation of teacher influence on a particular piece of discourse is undertaken.

As was stated previously, this brief outline of major elements in the writing process is by no means complete in examination and scope. The purpose here is simply to delineate the structure and orientation of the study so that the reader will have a guide of sorts to follow along with.

CONTEXT

The subject chosen for the present study is an eleven year old male currently in the seventh grade. Let us call him Tom. Tom is the third youngest in a family of three brothers and four sisters, all of whom reside at home in Eggertsville, New York, a suburb lying to the northeast of Buffalo in Western New York. Eggertsville is a predominantly white residential area composed of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Economically, his family may be classified as middle to upper middle class. His father is an independent electrical contractor, while his mother appears to be a supportive, loving influence, both in relation to Tom and to the family as a whole. The subject attended a local Catholic elementary school through the fourth grade. In grade three he scored in the 95th percentile in both the reading and arithmetic sections of the New York State Achievement Test. Additionally, at this time his I. Q. was found to be 151 plus. Tom has achieved "straight A" performance in all grades including his present seventh grade experience. Finally, last year he was retested for intelligence on the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test, which indicated that his I. Q. was 155. From the fifth grade on, Tom has attended on partial scholarship a local private non-denominational preparatory school which characteristically enjoys small class populations, intense academic preparation in a traditional mode, and an active and bright student populace. He has been a consis-

tent high honors student in all areas of academic endeavor, and he is also an excellent athlete and participates in various extracurricular activities. It is important to note that Tom enjoyed a supportive atmosphere at home (from an early age) for reading, writing and scholastic achievement. He mentioned that in the third grade he belonged to an advanced reading group comprised of six students who worked independently of each other and the teacher at reading and writing. In short, Tom is a personable, energetic, highly motivated adolescent who has a high degree of skill in expressing himself both orally and in writing.

THE NATURE OF THE STIMULUS

Throughout the entire case study, Tom evidenced a marked inclination to choose to write pieces of discourse which were reflexive in mode and which were related to self, human relationships, or to man's relationship with his natural environment. Additionally, in any situation where Tom was asked to improvise fictionally, almost all the writing was grounded some way in Tom's personal and actual experiences. Tom's first production of writing for the study centered on the investigator's suggestion that he write a short narrative about the most embarrassing incident he could remember. He chose as a topic an incident involving his embarrassment at having to wear shorts in the dead of winter at a major airport. When asked to write at home about a person, place or idea that he found especially intriguing, Tom produced a composition about clouds and his relation to them, both as natural phenomena and as metaphors which engender meditation. When requested to write a poem, Tom chose to write about the metaphoric significance of air, which again is related in the poem to human experience, this time in a generic sense. Tom made frequent comments about his preference for unrestrictive kinds of discourse. He chose to write a diary entry rather than a letter when requested to choose one. He enjoyed writing dialogue, but found even this too restrictive when the situation, or scene was given to him as a starting point. When Tom was requested to compose a short story at home, he experienced some difficulty in beginning due to the restrictive nature of the assignment. Given all the writing experiences in the study and Tom's related comments, it is obvious that he felt most able and most comfortable when composing pieces of discourse that were self-stimulated, concerned with self or human relationships, reflexive in mode, and informal in tenor.

> Chicago, a great city. Blah! It sure wasn't then. We were driving into the city; the weather was terrible. Snowy, icy highway was all I saw. I also saw some accidents. Only a few; about 30' 2 hours was the time it took us to drive what should have been a 20 minute drive. We were aiming for the Sheraton O-hare hotel.
>
> Since we had been on the road for over 8 hours; the occupants of our car, including me, naturally had to go to the lavatory. There was only one thing, though. We were driving up from Florida and most of us were dressed in shorts and short-sleeve shirts. Once in Chicago, the first place we could stop at was the airport. We couldn't

change into because our suitcases were on the roof. This meant we had to go in a busy airport with shorts on during 2°F weather! It wasn't exactly an enjoyable experience.

I rushed into the airport past many people with incredulous looks on their faces. The lavatory was nearer. I made it! Going back was just as hard as going in. I did it, but not without hurting my pride!

Going into an airport filled with people during 2°F weather with shorts was very embarrassing! I doubt I'll ever forget it!

CLOUDS

Clouds are very intriguing to my mind. I find them interesting in every aspect. The word "cloud" gives me a feeling of openness and space. I can think.

Clouds are ever changing. They constantly change in every way: shape, density, direction, speed, and size. This opens my mind, flooding it with thoughts never thought before. Thoughts of my past, and present, and future ideals and ambition. Also, thoughts of my well-being. I can think with clouds.

There are many different types of clouds. Cumulus, cirrus and stratus are technical names for three different types. I like the thin cirrus cloud with its thin, ever shifting white. I like this because the cirrus cloud is an example of me. It is always on the move, adding moisture (in my case information) as it grows and moves along its unprecedented course. Clouds aren't things; they are thoughts and examples.

Air

Air surrounds us.

In its vastness
We experience
Many changes.
Changes of sound that
Influence our actions.

Actions of the mind
And of the body that
Are all of air.

PREWRITING

The length of time devoted to prewriting for an individual piece of discourse varied greatly for Tom. Generally, when requested to write during the interview period, as exemplified by the piece concerning the embarrassing incident that took place in Chicago, Tom would give scant attention to any prewriting activity. He would readily adopt most topic suggestions offered by the investigator and commence writing after only a few moments or a few minutes of thinking. However, when writing at home, Tom consistently devoted a great deal of time to contemplation of what topic to write about. He related that he spent an evening and half the next day musing over various possibilities for the poem assignment. Similarly, he spent a lengthy time deciding what intriguing idea or event to write about at home, finally deciding, as has been said, on clouds and their significance for him personally. When asked to write a short story about anything he wished, he gave con-

siderable effort to deciding what should be the focus of this story. This investigator found, as Emig did, that the length of time available for prewriting had a great effect on the writer's choice of subject. Characteristically, Tom would choose more personal and philosophical topics when given ample prewriting time. For writing assignments done during interview time, Tom would usually choose to write about less abstract and less complex topics. In a sense, he could choose a contemplative or mechanical approach to the composing process depending on the amount of time available for prewriting.

PLANNING

Once coming to a decision about what topic to pursue, Tom would usually experience little difficulty in planning his initial writing expressions. All of Tom's planning was oral in nature except for one small incident of word-jotting in preparation for his paper on clouds. He also volunteered that he rarely, if ever, used outlines in planning a piece of discourse. In point of fact, Tom said that he usually used no planning devices at all and planned the various aspects of the piece of discourse coincident with composing it. For instance, his poem "Air" was written in ten minutes with no written planning whatsoever. While composing his short story, Tom would stop at various points to rest. However, he would continue to think about the piece and reflect on the direction it was going and various ideas that he might or might not use. Tom's practice indicates, and I'm sure he wasn't aware of this, that he approached writing as an organic enterprise, i.e., the piece of writing would take its shape in the actual process of composing. Tom also volunteered that he considered outlines inhibiting. However, he did say that while writing he gradually became aware of an overall purpose, structure, or scope to the composition or poem at hand. How he perceived this structure he could not say.

STARTING

Tom experienced little difficulty in starting to compose. There was evident some difference in Tom's ability to begin self-sponsored writing as opposed to assigned-topic writing. Generally, Tom would seem to have less difficulty in starting when reacting mechanically in composing other-initiated writing. While composing a requested short story, Tom did experience difficulty not only in planning the piece, but in starting to write it.

COMPOSING ALOUD

At the beginning of the case study it was arranged that the investigator would be present at all times to facilitate a viewing of the subject involved in the composing process. Tom experienced difficulty at vocalizing his thoughts at first, but soon felt somewhat at ease in attempting to reproduce orally the thought processes involved in the composing process. However, he tended to mumble at times and to speak so

quietly that analysis of syntactical and lexical transformational patterns was difficult. Even so, certain behavioral patterns concerned with composing aloud could be recognized. I should mention that half way through the study I decided to leave the room when Tom was composing to see what effect the presence or absence of the investigator had on the subject's ability to compose orally. Upon questioning Tom to note his reaction to being alone while composing orally, I found that he strongly preferred composing without the investigator present. He stated that while having the researcher present had no effect on his ability to compose, it had a great effect on his ability to vocalize his thoughts. He felt much more relaxed and free to express orally his thoughts while alone, and for this reason we continued to separate when I asked Tom to compose aloud. While working on a particular piece, he showed slight inclination to vocalize any anticipated compositional elements that he might utilize further on in the work. As previously stated, it seems that Tom composed in an organic manner, letting each element lead his into the next without prior anticipation.

REFORMULATION; STOPPING; CONTEMPLATING THE PRODUCT

I was greatly surprised when Tom first composed for me in that he exhibited such a slight need for reformulation of any kind. He never composed in rough draft and only very infrequently revised his writing, and then usually only by a deletion of a single word or two. Tom's final outside assignment was to compose a short story, and it was here that he encountered difficulties not only in planning, but in reformulation as well. Here again, the reformulation in this paper consisted simply of deleting single words.

When asked why or when he chose to stop composing, Tom consistently answered that he stopped when he felt he had said all that he wanted to say. For him stopping was as easy as starting.

Tom also consistently elected to give little attention to the contemplation of the final composition. Frequently he did not bother to read the finished paper and stated that in fact he did not like to read the whole discourse when done. He said that he knew what he had written because he wrote it so why bother reading it.

SEEMING TEACHER INFLUENCE

As mentioned previously, Tom was fortunate in having a mother who read to him and shared books with him at a very early age. He related how he used to read to his mother prior to going to kindergarten class each day.

Teacher influence is difficult to judge; however, it seems that Tom had a series of teachers who effectively supported his development as writer and reader. He seemed not to be overly concerned with technical correctness or what Professor Emig termed the "amenities", i.e. spelling,

handwriting, titling, and punctuation. This lack of concern, or more correctly, seeming unconcern, on Tom's part for the technical aspects of composition is not due to any reluctance to recognize these concerns as valid. Rather Tom evidenced considerable command of these technical considerations and simply dealt with them adequately without great notice or concern. Tom also did not seem to be concerned with such matters as length and choice of words.

CONCLUSION

Tom seems to enjoy writing and usually composes with ease and speed. He prefers writing in the reflexive mode, but does not express any predilection for a particular kind of discourse. His individual composing process is organic in nature, which implies that he plans as he composes. Tom also exhibits good control of technical correctness as he writes, but seems inclined to concentrate on what he wants to say rather than the way he is saying it. He is a creative and flexible writer who delights in being inventive with words and seemingly has no great difficulty in manipulating his language.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The strength of the case study approach obviously rests not in the single case study but in an aggregate of investigations. Only in this way can we gain perspective and understanding of any patterning within the composing process that is crucial to developing effective writing programs. More studies need to be conducted along both longitudinal and latitudinal lines so that all variables and contingencies will be accounted for and a valid conceptualization of the process of composing can take place. Also, more inquiry into the stages of prefiguring and planning should be undertaken, for obviously current teacher strategies do not begin to deal adequately with these generative stages in the composing process. The point is that the case study can be a useful tool in helping English teachers and others to focus on those aspects of the writing process that demand attention and guidance, instead of wasting time and effort on those aspects of composition that present no difficulty to the student.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

While implications for research involving the case study approach of inquiry are somewhat manifest, a word or two should be said concerning the validity and ramifications of my single investigation. As I mentioned previously, Emig's study and mine differ in scale and emphasis, but not in focus; and it should be remembered that my study is a limited inquiry in that it deals with only one case and with one subject. The "case study" is essentially an inductive approach to empirical research; and as such, it requires an adequate and wide sampling of subjects in order that results will be representational, conclusive, and authentic. The value of my single case investigation resides in the

providing of additional information and empirical evidence to previous findings. This supplementary evidence is not intended to be judgmental in itself, merely explicative. However, when examining an aggregate of findings, judgments can and should be given. My study actually serves then to give greater perspective and weight to many, if not all, of Janet Emig's conclusions about the composing process.

Emig suggested that for the most part the writing experience of the majority of English students in secondary schools are limited in focus, mode, and variety. The writing product, characteristically extensive in mode, is considered to be of greater importance than the writing process itself. It seems obvious to me that English teachers must realize that the *process* of composing is just that, a process which necessitates process-oriented education. Most current teaching strategies in English education, at least those recommended in most published grammar and composition texts, continue to treat writing and language as content rather than process. Simply, it is incorrect and dangerous to think of language as just so much data and informational content. If English is indeed a symbol system that students can manipulate, then we must give students every opportunity to manipulate it in all modes and kinds of discourse. The process of composing is essentially a thinking operation that involves symbolizing—"languaging"—our thoughts and feelings, and any valid approach to guiding writing must allow for expression by the student based on his own experience and on his own emotions. In a word, the emphasis on bland exposition in the extensive mode must give way to increased composing in the reflexive mode which permits inner self involvement.

The concomitant implications for English teacher education must also be evident. Teachers of English must be required to have a broad and varied experience in the composing process. Emig found that, "Partially because they have no direct experience of composing, teachers of English err in important ways. They underconceptualize and oversimplify the process of composing. Planning degenerates into outlining; reformulation becomes the correction of minor infelicities."[6] English teacher education must provide an opportunity for student teachers to write as they would have their students compose, in every mode and in every kind of discourse.

Finally, the relation between the composing process and the thinking process must be recognized as being of extreme consequence and value to the general education of every student. If we want to educate our students to think, then we must let them practice thinking in terms of process, language, and the entire spectrum of the human capability to symbolize. Such practice involves more talking, more writing, more listening, more sharing, in essence, more "languaging" to others and to our inner selves.

FOOTNOTES

James Moffett, **Teaching the Universe of Discourse** (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 7.

Janet Emig, **The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders** (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1971), p. 3.

Emig, p. 4.

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The Nichols School
Buffalo, New York

MONOGRAPH NUMBER THIRTEEN

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Insults, Smart Remarks, And Other Things I Might have said: A Spin-off From Kenneth Koch's *Wishes, Lies, And Dreams*

Agnes J. Webb

"Elect Liz God." This bit of blackboard graffiti was an apt smart remark aimed at the energetic yearbook editor who had inspired and browbeaten her staff into another prize-winning edition. Kids are witty satirists; and a word, gesture, or tone of voice can find its target while even the victim grins.

Invective, the art of insulting and cursing, has as ancient tradition. Celtic tribes sent their poets to the camps of the enemy to hurl insults the night before the warriors hurled their sticks and stones. I have always suspected that some people could talk you to death. King Tut's curse took centuries to find its mark; and no one has yet dared to test the effectiveness of William Shakespeare's epitaph "And curst be he that moves my bones." Spinners of tales and critics of society have peppered our literary legacy with smart backtalk to a world that is cruel, exasperating, or absurd.

Just as the clown in a trapeze act or dance routine must be an expert in control of his skill, the humorist must have command of language skills and assumptions to achieve the goal of a grimace, giggle, or guffaw. Although only a few student writers can control sustained wit, many can produce mockery with the guidance of short models and instructions. Eight of the tasks which follow utilize rhyme, near rhyme, alliteration, puns, and parody to transform offensive remarks into witty statements. Less obvious is the manipulation of communication signals that underlie the humor. Epitaphs, greeting cards, and introductions are conventional forms of communication with context and expectations assumed by a language community. Generally, epitaphs treat death seriously, cards say pleasant things, and introductions provide comfortable social knowledge about new people. The satirist shifts the attitude toward the subject or changes the subject matter itself to the unexpected,

and his distortion produces humor. The distortion is funny in relation to the expected, the conventional communication signal originally stated in the form of epitaph, card, or introduction.

The ellipsis of Dumb Conversations and I Muttered assumes a familiarity with predictable conversations or exchanges. The comment "My, how you've grown!" usually elicits a tolerant nod from most adolescents; the flip response purposely misreads the sociable nature of the comment and treats it with punning seriousness. The statements of Mutterings deliberately insist that a true statement is an adequate statement. It's true that the hamster chewed up the lunch ticket; but that's not the acceptable response to a cashier's request for money. The two tasks involving curses involve inappropriate responses also. Here trivial events evoke a major response, a curse, but one made up of unlikely wishes. Right Words, Wrong Place places the emphasis on context of language, the surrounding circumstances of the statement. These conscious blunders ignore the time and place restrictions of language, and these can be ignored only if they are part of the writer's knowledge of these restrictions.

The last task of the group changes the focus from production of verse and single lines to an observation of invective as a dramatic device in *Henry IV, Part I*. Although the individual selections are short, their relationship to diction, characterization, and plot can lead to consideration of these larger elements of the play.

The following are the writing tasks with models and instructions. Variations often multiply.

Epitaphs

> Here lies Willie,
> Died as he lived, silly.

Two lines, end rhyme. May be expanded to four or six lines with pairs of end rhymes. Opening words "Here lies (name)" followed by deathless verse describing the dear departed's virtues, flaws, or circumstances of departing. Try one for an enemy or one for a car thief.

Greeting Cards

Lines for a Christmas Card

> May all my enemies go to hell,
> Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel.
>
> Hillaire Belloc

Title designates the occasion or the person to receive the smart aleck card. Two lines (or more, if you like), end rhyme. Celebrate local grouch week, someone's unbirthday, or the anniversary of purchasing your sneakers.

Introductions

I'd like you to meet
Furry Fred.
That's not a bird's nest, it's his head.

I'd like you to meet
Shy Sue.
There she is, peeking out of her shoe.

First line, "I'd like you to meet"; second line, adjective and name beginning with the same sound; third line, last word rhymes with name.

Bird of Paradise Curses

To the Car that Just Passed Me

May the bird of paradise
Clot your STP.

Title directs the curse to the target; first line, "May the bird of paradise"; third line, appropriate dire action.

Cumulative Curses

These are similar to the bird of paradise curse, just longer and increasingly terrible. The opening lines or title set the scene for the curse or give the reason for retaliation, and the list of dread events grows. Dedicate one to the school bus driver or to a coach.

Struck from behind by a hot dog skier,
I sit here picturing how I'd like to see her.

May her next mogul conceal glass ice,
May her edges slide and her poles stick,
Her bindings snap and her cap depart.

May she lose her lift ticket, and just one glove,
May her ski club disband,
And her bus leave without her.

When her boots give a blister,
May she ski with her sister.

Dumb Conversations

These are one-liners that are half of a conversation, the answer to a dumb question or an often repeated remark. The one-liners reveal the conversation that is not reported.

I've applied to Mortuary College, Butcher's Training Tech, and Thruway Toll Collecting Institute.
(The unlikely answer to the question "Where are you going to school next year?")

Yes, I've grown a foot· now I have three.
(A pun reply to the comment "My, how you've grown.")

I Muttered as I walked Away

This is a variation of Dumb Conversations; they're truthful statements that appear to solve the absurd problem, but don't.

The combination is written down; it's on the
cover of the notebook that's locked in the locker.
(The useless reply to the question "Why didn't
you write your locker combination down somewhere?")

But the hamster did gnaw up my lunch ticket.
(The cafeteria lady still wants 75 cents for the lunch.)

Right Words, Wrong Place

"A plague on both your houses."

A Wedding toast

"A stitch in time saves nine."

Sign in an operating room

Popular sayings or familiar quotations from literature which are said at an inappropriate time or in an inappropriate place.

Zounds! A Varlet, Fie Upon Him

Castigations, rages, oaths, epithets: Shakespeare's characters whisper and roar them. A simple catalog of Falstaff's insults and those directed at him reveals invective as a dramatic device contributing to character development, plot events, and poetic imagery of the play. The first column, Names Falstaff Calls Others, is divided into two parts; the first part quotes the epithets and the second part identifies the receiver of the blistering comment. The second column, Things They Say About Him, is similarly divided into two parts. The first is the insult and the second identifies the speaker who so boldly risked Falstaff's retort.

Names Falstaff Calls Others		Things They Say About Him	
Hang ye, gorbellied knaves		Ye fat-kidneyed rascal	Hal
fat chuffs . . . . bacons	Travelers		
You starveling, you elf skin . . . . you vile standing tuck	Hal	Impudent, embossed rascal	Hal
		My sweet beef	Hal
good ticklebrain	Hostess		
good pint pot		Thou knave	Hostess
A plague of all cowards	Thieves	. . . . that trunk of humors, that bolting hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies	Hal
Revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen	Soldiers		

As the friendship of Falstaff and Hal cools, the exchange of insults stops between them; yet, Falstaff continues to berate servants and soldiers under his command.

> May the mockery, insults, smart remarks and epithet study give an Elizabethan flavor to blackboard graffiti.

State University of New York
At Buffalo

Commonplace Book, Venerable Teaching Tool

Richard E. Drdek

During the Thirties, many young people could be seen carrying into public libraries nickel composition books. Constant companions to school children of that period, the fifty sheets of ruled paper sewn up the spine to a stiff but flexible cover held, in separate volumes, the year's spelling work, arithmetic homework, and sometimes compositions. However, the particular ones seen in the libraries during vacation periods and on Saturdays were not used for schoolwork. They were so special that some of us invested a dime in the kind that had hard, chipboard covers. They were available in three colors: blue, green, or black, with splotches of white showing through the color, making them look like they were coated with towel lint. You can buy glued-together imitations today for forty-nine cents, plus tax. The real one, the real composition book, is gone along with the nickel double-dip ice cream cone, both of which were sold at the confectionary store near the school. The ones offered today couldn't serve the purposes for which they were used before. The separate sheets glued to the cloth spine break loose and fall out, a condition which would have been as welcome as spontaneous combustion. The stitching gave our composition books the dignity of a bound volume and the same expectations of durability.

Far from being task books, these extraordinary folios were the personal journals of young teen-agers and of many preteens. Into them each of us copied those verses, sayings, and prose paragraphs we wished to preserve. Like albums, they contained collections, not of things but of ideas. They were self-consciously personal in that each collector selected those items which would reflect the image he wished to project, although we were not aware of the psychology of it all at the time. The contents were precious, for inside each book were those things the individual valued. Mine contained a collection of the ridiculous along with the serious, perhaps out of fear that too much of one or the other would give the wrong impression. On the title page, the peruser can read:

I pity the baker,
I pity the cook,
I pity the faker
Who steals this book.

Among the notable entries there is an Ogden Nash four-liner which begins:

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.

I must have been impressed with achievement or I might have interpreted Tennyson's poem to be a call for adventure.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.

Several wise sayings of the oral language were also copied as was the following example:

Wipe your nose,
Your brains are leaking out.

And then there were camouflaged entries which might better have gone into a diary, such as:

Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
  Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say that I'm growing old, but add,—
  ---kissed me.

What miss was it, I now wonder, who had bestowed upon me such a great honor, sometime in my thirteenth year, that I dared to record it, and why was I unwilling to mention her name?

Included in each collection were some of the owner's most intimate thoughts and comments. All together the packages were self-revealing, and we were so aware of that fact that we guarded them as if they were shameful memoirs. Yet they were prepared with the hope that others would read them. Why create an image if no one could see it? We solved the problem by exchanging them on this basis: "If you'll let me read yours, I'll let you read mine." Such a contract was necessary to protect the self-image of each copier. Having exposed one's soul to ridicule, I dared not chide the other's choices. Highly personal, they were the reflections of one's mind, a wordy portrait of one's self.

Like all activities, maintaining the composition book served several needs. For one thing, building the collection occupied time, like any hobby. What can one do without money on a rainy Saturday afternoon or on an early summer's evening? How could one speed the hours after supper in the cold winter months? Books and magazines in the home were few. For a nickel or a dime we constructed our own personal libraries. We captured some great thoughts, like butterflies, and pressed them within the covers of our copybooks, to free them occasionally and let them flutter in the sunlight. The medleys also served each person's need for a self-portrait. If a man is known by the books he reads, then his

library is himself. Today's young people project themselves by the records they collect. All of us need something which says this is I; I am this.

Although the copybook has been a part of the literate's world ever since the written forms of languages were invented, their widespread use in English-speaking cultures didn't take hold until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Known as *Commonplace Books*, they became a part of almost every reader's library. During the reign of Queen Anne, English literature seemingly burst out onto a lush plain. Many writers were publishing quality material, prose works that were highly individual in style, graceful and clear. The essay, as a highly personalized literary form, greened and bloomed. Pamphlets became the chief media, and the most absorbing subject matter was politics. Defoe and Swift became masters of the broadside. Steele's *Tattler* and his more famous *Spectator*, which included the wit and stylism of Addison, became one of the earliest literary journals. Memoirs as a literary form acquired recognition with Pepys' *Diary* and Evelyn's *Diary*.

Commonplace books served the special interests of those who kept them for they organized, under different general headings, arguments or passages appropriate to the subject. Separate sections might cover such diverse topics as gallantry, poetry, literary criticism, love, America, royalty, or whatever other fare the owners wished to chase. However, without a changing pattern in the distribution of wealth, the books may have been thin and the brilliance of the stylists mentioned above along with that of Boswell, Johnson, Pope, Gray, and others may not have emerged. The landed gentry and city-dwelling aristocracy were noted for their coarseness, vulgarity, and general lack of interest in the joys of education. It was the rising middle class which supported the writers. Trade, as a result of England's growing colonial empire, was expanding along with the acquisition of new territories; and as the century reached its midpoint, manufacturing techniques were bringing the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. With the flowering of stylized English prose, the commonplace book captured for its keeper those exceptionally well phrased observations and sentiments which appealed to his or her prejudices, like carefully selecting a bouquet of blooms from a dazzling field of color and form.

The commonplace book migrated to America and took on a special flavor by combining quotations from local writers with those from abroad. Considering the amount of political pamphleteering that went on during the last quarter of the century, copiers with every possible political persuasion didn't want for material.

As the nineteenth century ended in America, the commonplace book served a different, vital need to a rapidly growing nation. It once more became an educational tool. Echoing through the classrooms of the new public high schools was the four thousand-year old voice of a teacher of scribes in ancient Babylonia, admonishing his students: "You

may earn your bread—for every man must—sweating in the hot fields, straining in the quarries, slaving in the mines, or you may sit in white linen in the cool shade of an arbor and maintain the records of those who boss the less fortunate. Practice, practice, practice!"

Growth in America was tied to growth in commerce, and as new citizens settled in this land as labor for the quickly expanding commerce, the bureaucracy of government expanded. Cities and counties sprouted where there had been wilderness, and each new community needed to establish a location for the maintenance and storage of governmental transactions, for commerce and government are interdependent halves of a whole. Neither part can tolerate ambiguities, as Gilgamesh's teacher of scribes once pointed out. No illegible words or phrases or numerals could appear which would lead to more than one interpretation. Spencerian penmanship, with its clear, rounded, and precisely slanted letters graced the documents of government and commerce. So precise were those ink tracings that all appeared to be written by Herbert Spencer himself.

Into their copybooks the boys entered, not their practice strokes, but the refined examples of a fine skill kept honed by continuous application. They copied published prose and poetry which not necessarily struck their fancies, but which were sure to appeal to a prospective employer. A graduate's copybook was his most important credential, in the same way that a commercial artist today carries with him a portfolio of his work. The parallel is not strained, for many of those copybooks were indeed works of art.

Whether the copying was done as a drill for perfecting handwriting or for the purpose of establishing an image of the copier, much more was being accomplished. The students were learning language and spelling kinesthetically. An adult's language, written or spoken, is controlled considerably by habit. So as the Spencerian students before us and we in the Thirties copied the wit of Ben Franklin, the wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, the sarcasm of Mark Twain, and the beauty of Walt Whitman, plus the snippets the latter group gleaned from slick magazine [Who remembers Edgar Guest and Carrie Jacobs Bond?] we were acquiring through highly controlled fingers a feeling for the flow of the language. As we carefully spelled out vaguely familiar words, they sneaked into our vocabularies.

I've tried out the idea on several occassions with fifth and sixth graders. I made a model of a commonplace book, entering into it things that I had copied such a long, long time ago, and I liberally sprinkled the pages with the creative contributions of school children. I introduced the idea, not as a task, but as a hobby to pursue. Some of the students accepted it. Not many, but enough. I'm glad that I passed the idea along. You may want to try it.

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What Is Language Sensitivity?

Marjorie Drabkin

If you do not think of linguistics only as a series of assorted sentence diagrams, you have become linguistically sensitive and know that linguistics means the scientific study of language. If you screech when you examine an oral reading diagnostic test that asks pupils to supply sounds for isolated letter symbols, you have become linguistically sensitive. If you howl when you examine readability formulas that count syllables and the length of sentences without considering syntactic complexity, then you have become linguistically sensitive.

Roger Shuy finds it incredible that "the training of reading teachers has proceeded, to date, with practically no emphasis on training future teachers to hear, distinguish and analyse the language that the child brings with him to school, and to which most of his reading will relate."[1] He further inveighs against "certain unfounded language stereotypes" that are perpetuated in teacher training institutes—that the disadvantaged child does not use language in his home and that he is nonverbal.[2] Teachers know so little about nonstandard dialect that they have repeatedly faulted pupils on oral reading inventories for pronunciation and grammar, when actually these pupils were translating the text into their own dialect.

Just recently Kenneth Goodman has been subjecting reading to a linguistically-oriented scrutiny. He finds it amazing that children have learned to read at all, since adults broke the language up into such splintered and difficult abstractions.[4] A perusal of phonic rules will certainly place us on Kenneth Goodman's side.

Linguistic sensitivity is seeping rapidly into the whole reading scene, but it will take time. There are, however, other areas that demand linguistic sensitivity.

If you stop short just before uttering the word *denigrate*, you have become linguistically sensitive. *Denigrate* was a perfectly respectable word until we became aware of cultural bias and how it influences the way we view the world. The Latin stem of *denigrate* means to blacken. Black in our culture has carried a pejorative meaning—to tarnish, sully or defame. Black is often associated with evil. Witches are clad in black, and we refer to the "black sheep" of the family. Black satin is seductive and suggests the temptations of Satan—and of evil. Those of us who have become linguistically and culturally sensitive now refuse to use a word that is prejudicial to our black brothers and sisters.

The intensive linguistic study of the past few decades has finally shaken loose the stranglehold of traditional English "Latinate" gram-

mar on our English classrooms. While in some cases grammar has been abandoned entirely, in others where teachers have been made sensitive to language, the attention of students is being directed to the structure of English. These same linguistically sensitive teachers are beginning to discover that they cannot teach what had been characterized as "correct" English. For one thing, we all speak a dialect. Perhaps it is the standard dialect, but we have discovered that the nonstandard dialect speakers in the class are not speaking bad grammar, but a highly complex language that has its own structural rules, and that has evolved because of isolating a people from the mainstream of standard dialect speakers.

Probably the only way to become linguistically sensitive is to study the history and evolution of English, and if possible, that of other languages. For a long time it seemed to many of us that the rules of English were handed down from the mountain.

Studying the history of English makes us acutely aware of the pure arbitrariness of spelling. During the great age of Shakespeare everybody spelled as he pleased. After over three hundred years of fruitless discussion by English pundits, Dr. Samuel Johnson finally decided to put some order in this area. His notions of spelling did not seem quite acceptable to Noah Webster, however, who in compiling a dictionary for nineteenth century America, decided that American spellings should be different from those of England. For this reason we have *honor* instead of *honour*, *defense* instead of *defence*, and *advertise* instead of *advertize*.

Punctuation also underwent a variety of style changes. In contrast to the semi-colon studded manuscripts of the prior centuries, our prose seems to be evading even the comma. There are still those who recoil in horror at the sight of an ampersand in formal writing, but it too had been perfectly respectable in seventeenth and eighteenth century manuscripts. Modern poets have revived it, probably in a state of rebellion.

If you feel that our language is sliding downhill, and if you simply cannot stand "like it is," you will discover that usage is the ultimate creator of all language. It is to the credit of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who set out to write a dictionary to purify the language, that after eight years of drudgery acknowledged that nothing can prevent language change.[5] Yet a prospering cafe restaurant at Lincoln Center in New York City was forced to change the word "saloon" in its name to *balloon*. Those who demanded it probably never knew that *saloon* originally designated a large hall, and that the grog shops had borrowed it to give class and social status to their establishments.[6]

Those who have become linguistically sensitive have also discovered that language is behavior and that language controls behavior. What is most disconcerting is finding out that man's ability to use language for strictly informative purposes was developed relatively late in the course of linguistic evolution, and that the tone of voice influences us much more than the actual content.[7]

Social conversation is largely presymbolic in character. The prevention of silence is itself an important function of speech. It is completely impossible for us in a social group to talk only when we have something to say. We voice opinions on the weather and pick things on which we are fairly sure there will be general agreement. Each new agreement, no matter how commonplace or obvious, breaks down barriers of suspicion and mistrust. People have always been uneasy with what is strange to them. Actually this presymbolic talk is like the cries of animals, a form of activity. College cheers, community singing, and other collective noise-making activities are examples of the presymbolic function of language. These noise-making activities assure people that others are just like themselves.[8]

A section called "For the Members" in the April 1974 *English Journal*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English carries a message from Walker Gibson and reviews the accomplishments of the Committee on Doublespeak. The present chairman of the Doublespeak Committee Dan Dieterich of the University of Illinois is co-author of a useful ERIC RCS Report on Doublespeak. That report appeared in the October 1973 *English Journal*. Four books by committee members will be published so as to reach secondary school and college teachers with practical materials. Dan Dieterich himself has written on the phenomenon of euphemism:

> We are witnessing in our time an expanding effort on the part of powerful leaders in the society to con the citizenry by choosing particular names for unpleasant or unjust events . . . . Disadvantaged (not black, not poor, not ignorant). Inoperative (not fabricated, not lying, not even mistaken). Air support (not bombing, not murder).[9]

In commenting about Watergate, Dan Dieterich notes that in our present climate illegal acts are renamed "inappropriate," a burglary is an "entry," and bugging somebody's telephone is referred to as "intelligence gathering."[10]

In this world of lying, it is our duty as teachers to make pupils sensitive to language devices that influence their feelings and sway their minds. The same literary devices used in great literature may be used elsewhere for other purposes. The human species finds pleasure in the repetition of similar sounds, as in catchy titles or slogans. The repetition of grammatical structures has the same effect:

> First in war
>
> first in peace
>
> first in the hearts of our countrymen[11]

At this point we expect the flag to unfurl.

We are emotionally influenced as well by rhyme, alliteration, assonance, crossed alliteration, and the subtleties of rhyme. We admire periodic sentences, in which completion of the thought for dramatic effect keeps us in suspense. We are stirred by antithesis—strongly op-

posed notions laid side by side in parallel phonetic or grammatical construction. The political speeches of John Kennedy were filled with these sharp contrasts.

Metaphors are not ornaments of discourse, but expressions of strong feeling, and when they become overused, we call them clichés and push them into disuse. Slang, based on metaphor, vividly expresses people's feeling about life and about the things they encounter in life.

Allusions work as an affective device only when the hearer is familiar with the history, literature, people or events alluded to. Whenever a group of people—the members of a single family or members of a whole civilization—have memories and traditions in common, extremely subtle and efficient communication becomes possible through the use of allusion. (We may wonder about the discarding of the classics by the off-beat generation. Perhaps this is to cut off communication.) Dictators have been known to rally the people by recalling events of past greatness.

In addition to these devices there are others. Authoritative language is used to influence rather than be understood. Such writing is characteristic of bureaucrats and writers of official reports. Authoritarian language has its stereotypes, which are designed to impress, but its success is probably caused by a quirk of human nature, the willingness to accept complication for profundity.[12] It has been noted that no bureau chief in Washington today would dream of submitting a position paper without getting the words "posture," "thrust," "counterproductive," and "parameter" into his text somewhere.[13]

The passive voice is used to escape responsibility, to cover up the insignificance of the actor, or to conceal the actor. It seems safe to state that one reason the passive voice has survived is that it enables the operator to be noncommittal.[14]

The language of intellect may appeal to the learned few, but even then can we be sure it is unbiased? The writer selects his facts and details, and this can result in slanting. In fact, what people state often reveals more about themselves than about the subject. This kind of biased slanting is not uncommon in private gossip and backbiting. We do not expect to find it, however, in our newspapers and magazines. We have no way of really finding out what the facts are. Slanting can best be described as a technique of lying without telling any lies.

Acquiring language sensitivity is probably necessary for survival. There can be no real reading comprehension without sensitivity to language and its effect on behavior. As English teachers we must make all students aware of the devices used in language to influence human behavior in all areas of communication—in speech, in print, and through the media. Teachers must also make students aware of the sociological implications of nonstandard dialects, regional dialects, and social dialects. Language has been a social and economic weapon.

through the media it can become a dangerous political weapon. The least we can do is to become linguistically sensitive.

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New York City Board
Of Education

Are The S.A.T.'s Telling Us Something?

Jerome Carlin

The continuing decline in high school students' scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test may be saying something to English teachers. On this test, sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and prepared by the Educational Testing Service, the annual scores for both verbal and mathematical skills have been skidding steadily downward. In the last decade the verbal aptitude mean score has dropped from 478 to 445. Although the teaching profession does not usually scrutinize the S.A.T. averages with the same dedication as stock investors watching Dow-Jones, teachers can now see in the S.A.T. results an equally thought-provoking indicator.

When the Dow falls, the analysts want to know what's behind the slippage. Is it just a technical reaction or a really meaningful response to economic developments? And what should everybody with a stake in the market and the economy—from the corporation executive to the manager of a pension fund—do about it?

Those who have a stake in the educational areas covered by the S.A.T.'s have reason to ask their own questions. If each year the test results of more than a million students continue to extend the curve of an unbroken decline in verbal skills, then English teachers ought to be asking why. Are the kids less intelligent than they used to be? Have the tests become progressively more difficult? Were the tested students a less selective population—less of an elite—as the years went by? Have social and cultural aspects of the American scene—such as the often decried erosion of the work ethic—made children, like their elders, less willing to work or study hard, less impelled to scramble for competitive success? Or have teaching and learning from kindergarten through the twelfth grade gradually become less effective in the tested areas?

For some of these questions definitive answers may never be arrived at; for others the only immediate answers are subjective judgments. On two specific matters—the comparability of the tests and the relative stature of the tested groups from year to year—some limited light has been shed by officials of the Educational Testing Service and the College Entrance Examination Board.

In a front-page article discussing the declining S.A.T. scores, *The New York Times* attributed to E.T.S. a statement that the examination "changes little from year to year in the kinds of questions asked." That assurance gives support to the validity of comparing test results during

the ten-year period of the downward curve; the likelihood seems remote that the questions, though of the same kind, tended without exception to be more difficult with each passing year when the mean score invariably declined. In the same article the *Times* also reported some judgments on the quality of the student population. Dr. William W. Turnbull, president of E. T. S., was cited as believing that a decade ago the tested students were "a more select subgroup." Dr. Turnbull said, "As the percentage of those seeking higher education has risen, much of the increase has of necessity come from the middle and lower parts of the scale, driving down the average." But an official of the College Board, "who asked not to be identified," held a conflicting view. He reported, according to the *Times*, "that the number of students taking the S.A.T. had leveled off at about one million several years ago and that the explanation regarding increasing numbers taking the test might not be as sound as it seemed at first." And "it might be time to start thinking about the possibility that elementary and secondary schools are not preparing students as well in verbal and mathematical skills as they did in former years."

Although the limited skills measured by the S.A.T. are by no means the whole of what is learned in the English class, they are an important part. If we tentatively accept the possibility of a genuine decline of the learning of those skills by a significant sample of the high school population, can we zero in on any developments that perhaps were contributive?

At the secondary level the past decade saw our instruction breaking out of the structured, sequential English curriculum. "Schools are prisons," some critics had been saying, "and too much of what you teach, the kids don't see as relevant to their lives." Although often characterized by sensationalism and overkill, this critical attack carried enough truth and weight to generate productive change. In English classes the topics students talked and wrote about became earthier and closer to the realities they perceived and cared about. The works they were encouraged or allowed to read came nearer to being in the mainstream of current adult reading.

Our leadership, meanwhile, had no thought of abandoning the English curriculum or of giving up the unending process of curriculum revision. Curriculum writers—and I was one of them during this time—emphasized in bold type that their sequences were not meant to be straitjackets. Nothing of course was really novel in that, for the oldest teacher on the faculty will tell you that each newly published state or local curriculum bulletin arriving in a school has always said: avoid slavish adherence to these prescriptions; adapt them to your students' needs; feel free to be creative.

The difference this time sprang from a more relaxed cultural climate that had its reflection in the schools. Here and there the rap sessions of group therapy and the verbal interaction of encounter groups were mirrored in the daily classroom discussions. The spontaneity of Happenings crept into the activities inside schoolroom walls. The walls

themselves fell away in the schools of a few communities, and students went outside to pursue their studies. Teachers and students were free at last.

Into this scene came electives with all their favorable vibes. Not a few English departments issued questionnaires asking students what courses *they* would like teachers to give in the following year. The kids, by and large, responded with enthusiasm. And if it was also liberating for teachers, it was revolutionary for the English curriculum as applied in the classroom. In September one teacher might arrive with an attache case stuffed with plans for a fully structured course on filmmaking or on the American scene or on marriage as novelists see it. Another faculty member, with no luggage other than a few general ideas, might plan the elective course entirely with the class from the opening bell onward. Curriculum restrictions were necessarily loosened or waived. Where were the no-nos of yesteryear?

Whether committed to electives or not, schools and teachers tended to liberate themselves from long-established holies regulating subject matter, materials, teaching methods, and the proper ambience of an English class. Even lesson plans, or the attitude toward them, became a source of future shock. I recall one high school principal's complaining of an English teacher who persisted in preparing lesson plans "in entirely too much detail." She had to hang loose or wing for it.

Throughout this period, however, some thinkers were doubtful about the trend, raising questions about the quality and quantity of learning that would take place in a setting without solid structure. Besides, as every schoolteacher knows, even a good trend once started tends to gain speed along the educational glory road until it is past safe limits. Those who favored the freedom movement were not unmindful of the dangers. When promoting electives in New York City's high schools, for instance, the central board's Bureau of English issued a statement urging teachers to weave into their courses, so far as possible, all the strands of the curriculum: reading, literature, composition, speech, and language. A similar concern was evident throughout the country in publications and panels on electives and open education. The risks taken were not uncalculated.

What the decline in verbal aptitude results on the S.A.T. may now be signaling is the need for a reassessment of whether current English teaching has in fact reconciled freedom and discipline. Our theory has been that in the laboratory atmosphere of a freer, more open kind of teaching and learning students would make greater gains in all aspects of English. We need to take a hard look at whether that is so, notably through research, testing, study groups, and conferences. Where such a reassessment will take us is unpredictable. Certainly too much would be lost by one of those 180-degree turns common to schools and society. At this moment our English classes have moved closer to the stream of contemporary life. Few of us would want to lose that. Nor would most

English teachers approve a navigational correction steering us toward bread-and-butter skills as the only proper destination. There was never a time when the English class could serve more rewardingly than now in our students' search for humanistic values.

Reassessment and redirection, yes. Reactionary reversal, no.

Brooklyn, New York

(N)ever Write like (?) You Talk: Teaching the Syntax of Reading and Composition

Harvey Minkoff

—Do you wish to write poetry?
—No, no. Not poetry.
—Ah, then prose?
—No. Not prose and not poetry.
—But it must be one or the other.
—Why?
—Because there are only prose or poetry.
—Only prose or poetry?
—Yes, sir. Whatever is not prose is poetry; and whatever is not poetry is prose.
—If someone speaks. . . what's that?
—Prose.
—Really? When I say 'Nicole, bring me my slippers and nightcap'. . . that's prose?
—Yes indeed.
—Well! I've been speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing a thing about it.

Molière, *The Bourgeois Gentleman.*

When the teacher of Molière's Bourgeois Gentleman triumphantly shows that "Nicole, bring me my slippers and nightcap" is prose, he is the type of numerous composition teachers who tell students to write the way they speak—and are then mortified at the result. For, while being natural—or writing like you talk—is a first step in overcoming the common paralysis induced by expanses of blank paper, it is hardly the same thing as writing mature prose. Quite to the contrary, in fact, mature writing contains any number of conventions seldom or never found in mainstream native speech. And if this is not readily apparent to many of us, it is because long intimacy with writing has changed elements of our speech—removing it from the mainstream. Thus, even if it might be acceptable for us to write the way *we* speak, it is certainly not acceptable for our students to write the way *they* speak. And we don't write the way we speak, anyhow.

While most teachers intuitively feel that this is true, the depth of this feeling is usually limited to such insights as the following, taken from a fairly recent textbook for prospective high school English teachers:

"The act of writing, by virtue of its permanence and especially its separation from the reader, demands much more careful attention than speech. . . . Unless sentences as well as paragraphs reveal a sure grasp of concepts and their relationships, a reader may become either confused or disinterested."[1] Thus, the forty-nine page chapter entitled "Written Expression" discusses the nature of rhetoric and clear thinking, but has only one sentence on the distinctive constructions of writing, the suggestion that teachers "emphasize especially the free noun cluster, the nonrestrictive appositive, the verbid clauses and absolutes. . . ."[2] Yet even this little is preferable to the apparent confusion of rhetoric and structure that seems to have motivated Karl Wallace's remark in "Towards a Rationale for Teachers of Writing and Speaking" that "whether one is writing or speaking he is subject to the same conventions of grammar, syntax, semantics," based as it is on the assertion that "the purpose and method of a composition wield larger and more significant effects on style than the medium. . . . the pervasive influence of purpose and method extends to the narrowest aspects of style, even to the mechanics of handling the sentence."[3] Now, while some aspects of mechanics are purely stylistic, others are undoubtedly functions of the medium or conventions of writing itself.

Among the first scholars to systematically investigate variable usage in America, John Kenyon distinguished between *levels* which, with their connotation of higher and lower, refer to value judgements and *varieties* which refer to functional adaptations to differing contexts.[4] He thus recognized intersecting vertical and horizontal parameters labeled "Standard Substandard" and "Formal Informal" respectively. Unfortunately, within his cultural category "Substandard" he includes the Molièrean term "illiterate speech." Terminologically more careful, Martin Joos does not mix literacy with speech in *The Five Clocks*, in which he posits five situational varieties of spoken English—intimate, casual, consultative, formal, frozen—characterized by such things as complexity of sentence structure, expectation of feedback, and the speaker's estimate of shared experience with the hearer. Moreover, Joos argues that these varieties exist in the speech of all adults—intimate and casual even in the speech of the most educated and sophisticated, formal and frozen even in that of the uneducated and unsophisticated. And that he is correct is obvious to anyone who has ever thought about what, at one extreme, motivates the deformed formal syntax and vocabulary of municipal service employees and blue-collar workers being interviewed on television, or why, at the other extreme, saying that someone "talks like a book" is not a compliment.

Extending this approach to prose, Henry Gleason Jr. shows, in *Linguistics and English Grammar* (pp. 367-373), how situational varieties of writing parallel, though by no means coincide with, those of speech. In fact, two of Gleason's major insights are, one, that the very nature of writing precludes the existence of an "intimate" register, and, two, that "informal" writing, though functionally equivalent to "casual" speech, is structurally closer to the more formal "consultative."

For as Robert Allen notes about his own work in *English Grammars and English Grammar* (p. 158): "... saying that this is a grammar of written English is not the same as saying that it is a grammar of formal English. Written English includes all the kinds of English that appear in writing—informal as well as formal." And, going one step further, we should realize that, while all speakers and writers have functional varieties, the specific structural details will vary; for those of us whose lives center on literacy, consultative or even casual speech may adopt some of the features of writing, perhaps becoming more structured and consciously stylistic than even the writing of many laypeople. But this does not deny the fact that each person's speech differs from that person's writing.

It is to be regretted, therefore, that so little has been done to fill in the linguistic details of these varieties in mainstream usage and even less to study their consequences to the English curriculum. Yet it would seem to follow that if there are written structures not found in speech, they will not be learned during normal childhood language acquisition. And if this is true, then learning to read and write, for example, is not merely learning the correspondence between aural and visual symbols; it is learning the symbols for specifically written—and therefore previously unknown—linguistic elements, the absence of which at least partially accounts for the unacceptable compositions of students who write like they talk. Of course, in theory this has long been known by linguists, W. Nelson Francis, for one, having pointed out twenty years ago that "to a greater or less degree, the child who is learning to read is also encountering a new dialect. . . . Even in the minimum case, where he has always heard standard English carefully spoken, he will find words, idioms, and constructions in his reading materials that are seldom if ever used in ordinary speech."[5]

Since the difference between one's active and passive vocabulary is so well-known and since vocabulary enrichment is such an entrenched part of English programs, nothing more needs to be said about the words and idioms of writing. But it is worthwhile to look more closely at the syntactic constructions of even semiformal writing that are seldom if ever used in ordinary—that is, casual and consultative—speech.

The most obvious area of contrast is punctuation. While it might intuitively seem that punctuation in writing corresponds to intonation in speech, we can readily see that this is not true, that in fact much punctuation signals specifically written syntax. For example, though many commas represent pauses, there is no analog in speech to the commas appearing in such a series as

> Every Tom, Dick, and Harry has coffee, toast, bacon and eggs for breakfast.

Indeed, if there is a pause in this sentence it is between *Harry* and *has*, the end of the subject and the beginning of the predicate. And there is *no* punctuation there. Moreover, though many pauses are marked by

periods, there is no analog in speech to the difference between a period and a semicolon. For as Charles Fries shows in *The Structure of English* (pp. 10-11), even to English teachers the difference is one of widely varying personal preference. Clearly, these conventions must be taught. And in general they are.

But now consider the dash. This device wreaks havoc on the reading of college freshmen and is almost nonexistent in the writing of my graduate students. Moreover—or, perhaps, this is a cause, not a concomitant fact—it is barely nodded at in most grammar texts and downgraded where it is mentioned. Thus, one of the fullest discussions that I have found in a high school text contains the widespread caveat that "over-dependence on the dash . . . reduces its emphatic effect and suggests a lack of maturity and restraint in the writer's style."[6] So too the fullest discussion in a college text refers to the dash as "one of those expository aids best monitored by restraint."[7] Yet, though both texts are less than ten years old, as long ago as 1948, George Summey Jr., in *American Punctuation* (p. 162), noted that in his survey of the most respected periodicals and columnists of the time "the most frequent interior mark except the comma is the dash," occurring in 8.6% of the sentences surveyed. And in my own very informal check of these figures against more recent samples, dashes appeared in about 20% of the sentences on the editorial and Op-Ed pages of the *New York Times* and in the reportage of *Newsweek*. And horror of prescriptive stylistic horrors, *Newsweek* (March 11, 1974) even had this paragraph—slightly edited for brevity—in which each of the five sentences contains a dash:

> The sealed report, written by the prosecutors and cleared with the grand jury, was a guide to the questions they thought *somebody* should ask the President; they saw only one alternative forum—a court of impeachment. The grand jury, *Newsweek* learned, shared the prosecution's belief that—but for his station—Mr. Nixon ought to have been answerable to some sort of criminal charge. This conclusion, according to *Newsweek*'s sources, turned largely on evidence—presumably including the March 21 tapes—that the President at least knew of the hush-money payments. The prosecutors believed Mr. Nixon was accordingly liable at a minimum to a charge of misprision of a felony—failing either to report or stop the commission of a crime. But, one source told *Newsweek*, they felt the evidence was stronger than that—strong enough to enmesh the President as a knowing party to the cover-up.

It is certainly significant, moreover, that all of these dashes signal constructions that do not seem to have close analogs in spoken syntax, being expressed instead through additional sentences or explanatory phrases.[8]

Also apparently lacking analogs in mainstream speech are the four phrases set off by commas. The first one, "written by the prosecutors and cleared with the grand jury," is a non-restrictive modifier—one of the most pervasive features of mature writing, but probably unheard (of) in mainstream speech, being used only by highly literate people who have borrowed it from writing. As English teachers, we have all measured out our lives with lessons on non-restrictive modifiers, so no additional testimonials are needed of the difficulty students have with this construction. But it should be said that the probable cause of the difficulty is

the absence of the construction in speech.

On the other hand, any difficulty connected with the last set off phrase,

But, one source told *Newsweek*, they felt . . .

arises from its similarity to the spoken (and written)

But one source told *Newsweek* they felt . . . .

For, since the two constructions seem to be either identical in meaning or only insignificantly different, it may appear that the two are actually one. School grammars tend to list this type of structure and the other two set off phrases in the sample as either expletives or parentheticals; but they are surely a much more integral part of the sentence than a true parenthetical, and one's linguistic intuition rebels against classing them with "you know" or expletive *there* and *it*. A better analysis is that they stand midway between direct and indirect quotation and that they are, paradoxically, embedded independent structures. But whatever name is given to them, they certainly seem to represent a construction unique to writing."

Related to these non-restrictive modifiers is the appositive adjective phrase, for example,

The stranger tall and menacing petted the pussycat.

This differs from the classic non-restrictive modifier because there is no contrasting restrictive:

X The stranger tall and menacing petted the pussycat.

Moreover, it seems to be limited to true adjectives; present and past participles functioning as adjectivals do have the restrictive–non-restrictive contrast:

The team battered and beaten was ours.
The team, battered and beaten, was unbowed.

The politician hemming and hawing is our Congressperson.
The politician, hemming and hawing, answered the question.

Though all three of these adjectivals can be attributive to the noun in speech, in writing they can also be attributive to the noun phrase. Thus, both speech and writing have the following:

The tall and menacing stranger . . . .
The battered and beaten team . . . .
The hemming and hawing politician . . . .

But only writing has:

Tall and menacing, the stranger . . . .
Battered and beaten, the team . . . .
Hemming and hawing, the politician . . . .

Superficially similar to these are such participial absolutes as

Having finished dinner, we left.

Yet, while the previous group are clearly adjectival, this construction may actually be a sentence adverbial, as may be seen by comparing the following sentences:

Smiling broadly, we left. (adjectival)
Finishing dinner, we left. (adjectival?)
Having finished dinner, we left. (adverbial?)
After we finished dinner, we left. (adverbial)

Ignoring the problem of nomenclature, however, it is clear that only the last example is likely to occur in speech, the others, in contrast, are very common in writing, as in these passages from *The New Yorker* (March 18, 1974):

> Sitting at the piano, he sang in a soft baritone. After doing the standards, he sang several songs he had written himself.
>
> She blushed furiously, apparently having hoped to get away with anonimity.

Moreover, the verb phrases "having hoped" and "had written" bring us to another area of speech/writing contrast—the full use of the auxiliaries. It is theoretically possible to produce a sequence of auxiliaries like "might have been being eaten," which could appear in such a sentence as

> The ten billion and first hamburger might have been being eaten at the very moment that they were announcing that the ten billionth had been eaten.

Of course, such extreme examples are not common, but, in general, writing contains more complex auxiliaries than speech does—especially in signaling sequence of tenses. Thus, "songs he had written" would probably occur in speech as "songs he wrote" and "having hoped" as "since she hoped."

This is not to say that the syntax of writing is necessarily more complex or more difficult than that of speech. As William Norris says, "Expository writing makes use of a more limited range of sentence types than speech. Statements predominate; questions are rarer . . . . edited written English is more regular and 'correct' . . . ."[10] Part of this regularity obviously compensates for the speaker-hearer interaction that serves to clear things up in speech. But this is not the whole explanation. For, while there can be no disagreement with Kellogg Hunt's goal of prose that is "incapable of being misunderstood even on a first reading,"[11] some specifically written constructions are incapable of being so read. One such is the "Not this, but that" construction, which corresponds to the "This, Not that" of speech, and whose conclusion must be read before the beginning can be understood. For example, the beginning

> Not the cost of food, but . . . .

may be followed by three different types of phrase, each requiring a different reading of "cost of food":

> Not the *cost* of food, but its quality bothers people.
> Not the cost of *food*, but the cost of housing bothers people.
> Not the *cost of food*, but the quality of life bothers people.

But even if there is no simple explanation as to *why* written syntax is different from spoken, there can be no doubt *that* it is different. And this difference has obvious consequences to the English curriculum, to

the teaching of reading, composition, and literature.

If, as it is reasonable to believe, learning to read a previously mastered construction is easier than learning to read and learning new constructions simultaneously, then beginning reading materials must be accordingly designed. And, even more important, reading must be approached as a continuing process of learning to decipher increasingly more complex and more sophisticated constructions—not merely in the elementary grades, but through high school and perhaps into college literature courses. This suggestion is hardly radical, and, in fact, many schools think that this is what they are now doing. Yet they cannot be doing it, since a taxonomy of syntactic difficulty—analogous to the numerous graded word lists that exist—has never been developed. Moreover, many people seem to think that such an approach is not needed, since they learned to read without it. The answer to this objection is that it may be true that it is possible, despite all obstacles, to muddle through and finally learn to read; but wouldn't it be simpler to approach a skill systematically, to be alerted to the lurking obstacle before tripping over it?

This same element of efficiency can be applied to teaching composition. If reading is passive recognition of symbols, then writing is the active production of them; and the most efficient way to teach composition is to introduce new constructions through readings and then require them in students' writing. This is the basic format of almost every creative writing course and freshman anthology, but it is too often limited to rhetorical figures instead of including such non-"creative" areas as sentence structure.

All of which leads to the English teacher's first love—literature. Though we want our students to read great literature, to understand it, to appreciate it, and ultimately to make its lessons part of their inner beings, we seldom succeed in getting them to read it. And this is because they do not understand it. And though part of the trouble is theme, character, and imagery, a much more significant part is syntax: the language that they are reading is not the language that they speak. But my own controlled experiments show that teaching them the language of literature not only improves their understanding, it increases their appreciation; my experience with high school and college students, with Shakespeare and modern authors, has been that students are actually excited about the minutiae of grammatical analysis when they see that it is one of the paths to a new world of ideas and enjoyment.[12]

And enjoyment is a central aspect of the dynamique of mature writing. The function of most speech is strictly utilitarian: its purpose is to convey information. When its purpose begins to include impressing the audience, speech moves toward some of the conventions of writing. In contrast, almost all writing includes as part of its purpose the desire to impress the audience—since if they are not impressed they will not read on. Moreover, when meeting a stranger, we can never be sure of his language skills, and must act accordingly. But certain assumptions are almost always in order about unknown readers: they are not the televi-

sion generation, they have chosen to master a skill, and can therefore be expected to know and appreciate its conventions. It is this, then, that causes the syntax of writing to differ from that of speech. The syntactic constructions are not necessarily clearer or more logical; they are simply the rules of a game, or, perhaps, the conventions of an art. The writer knows them, and knows that the reader knows them. The rest is playing the game. And with this in mind, the reader is invited to envision this essay as a speech and see how much would have to be changed—from the visual word-play in the title to the creation of *dynamique* in this paragraph.

Notes

Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, James R. Squire, **Teaching Language and Literature**, Second Edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), p. 420.

Ibid., p. 473-474. A note at this point further refers the reader to Francis Christensen, "The Problem of Defining a Mature Style," **English Journal** 57 (1968): 572-579. As this is an important contribution to the field, there is the suggestion that the authors did at least feel that more than a sentence might be useful.

English Journal 50 (1961): 384-391; reprinted in Dwight L. Burton and John S. Simmons, **Teaching English in Today's High Schools** (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 291-302.

"Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English," **College English** 10 (1948): 41-46.

The Structure of American English (New York: Ronald Press, 1953, 1958), p. 556.

The Oregon Curriculum: Language, Rhetoric (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), vol. 6, p. 152.

William Schwab, **Guide to Modern Grammar and Exposition** (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 249.

Having thus far defended the honor of the dash, I will leave the reader with the only indefensible example that I have discovered—a dash within a dash:

The American companies—identified as the partners in the Arabian American Oil Company—Exxon, Standard Oil of California, Texaco and Mobil—were said to be acting to depress prices. . . .

The New York Times, March 17, 1974, p. 1.

For a clearer understanding of the difficulties in analyzing this structure, the reader may want to consider the following distribution:

One source said (that) they felt . . . (speech and writing)
X One source said, (that) they felt . . .
They felt one source said, that . . . (writing)
But one source said (that) they felt . . . (speech and writing)
But one source said, they felt . . . (writing)
X But one source said, they felt . . .

"Teaching Second Language Reading at the Advanced Level: Goals, Techniques, and Procedures," **TESOL Quarterly** 4 (1970): 23.

"Improving Sentence Structure," **English Journal** 47 (1958); reprinted in Harold B. Allen, **Readings in Applied English Linguistics**, Second Edition (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), pp. 375-381.

For the details of our experiment, see Sharon Katz, "Linguistics and the Study of Shakespearean Plays," in Harvey Minkoff, **Teaching English Linguistically: Five Experimental Curricula** (New Rochelle: Iona College Press, 1971), pp. 113-138. For a list of syntactic structures likely to trouble high school students, see Harvey Minkoff and Sharon Katz, "Spoken and Written English: Teaching Passive Grammar," **College Composition and Communication** 24 (1973): 157-161.

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On Teaching Augustan Poetry

John E. Sitter

During the last class on the *Rape of the Lock* a bright young woman in the back row asked, "Why did Pope bother to write this?" I found the question particularly disconcerting because the questioner was not being perverse, but clearly was being frustrated, and because other students seemed to share her puzzlement. (The narrative pauses here, while the reader suspects that the instructor repeated the question to gain time, then paced, then answered neither wisely nor too well.) Several days later it occurred to me that she would not have asked why Donne bothered to write *The Extasie* or why Wordsorth wrote *I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud*. He must have been lonely as a cloud, as Donne must have been ecstatic. But what was Pope's "bother"?

The question cannot be answered as it should be by referring to Arabella Fermor's hair or to John Caryll's request that Pope patch things up between the families. It is really a question of what constitutes the occasion of the poem—where imaginative and historical facts converge—and thus becomes a question about the nature of much Augustan poetry. *Mac Flecknoe*, *Absalom and Achitophel*, many of Swift's poems, the *Dunciad*, all raise this question for post-Romantic undergraduates if not for postgraduate neoclassicists. The question does not arise with all poems of the period; those which can be read (or mistead) as wholly private *or* wholly public do not seem to present as much difficulty. No one asked why Dryden wrote *To the Memory of Mr. Oldham* ("They must have been intense friends," one journal entry began); but other poems of praise (of Congreve and Anne Killigrew) seemed "too impersonal." Poems which might be taken as even more impersonal, however, and which would presumably arouse more resistance, have generally aroused less. The *Essay on Man* or Rochester's *Satyr Against Mankind* do not seem to raise skepticism about the poets' legitimacy; the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* and *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* do.

Private personality is fine; public impersonality is, if not so fine, quite all right. It is the intersection of personal and public truths that seems to be most problematic. For many students that intersection is frequently the scene of collisions or annoyed braking. The assumption, then, is that poetry should be entirely personal and sincere if it is going to be personal at all. Students were particularly distrustful of Dryden's "sincerity" when, in discussing *Mac Flecknoe*, I said that he did not *hate* Shadwell. Sincerity would have covered a multitude of sins, including a lack of charity. "Personal" is similarly defined more in self-referential than specific terms: it is somehow more personal to say that the world is too much with us than that its Shadwells are.

I am generalizing about student predispositions of course. Many students are caught up in the *Rape of the Lock* from the start, responding to its fiction as to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and regarding questions of occasion or "purpose" as odd or even irritating. Since Pope was at least half serious about his sylphs as "secret truths, from learned pride concealed," I do not think this response would displease him. But the *Rape of the Lock* is easier to regard as pure fantasy than most Augustan poems.

To despair over the decline of taste or to say that the average college student reads Rod McKuen "for poetry" is not much to the point. Students do have a particular difficulty reading Augustan poetry, and the reasons have less to do with the nature of its refinement than with a contemporary sense of what does or does not constitute a poetic occasion and a poetic perspective. Contrary to my expectations upon leaving graduate school, I have yet to encounter an undergraduate who disliked the *Essay on Man* because it is "dry" or "rational" or "abstract." Several students in several classes have described it as "mystical" or have drawn connections with Plato or, more often, with Eastern philosophy. There is an irony here, of course, in that some of the enthusiasm stems from the fact that many of Pope's traditional ideas are full of novelty for post-Humanist students; the Chain of Being is a missing link in their intellectual backgrounds. But another irony is that their response is often truer to the poem than that of the teacher who explains dutifully that Pope is versifying neoclassical doctrine. There is, after all, something mystical in the poetic conviction that everything is linked to everything and in the cryptic linguistic compression used to insist that many things are really one thing. This is not to regard Lovejoy and his successors as killjoys for having traced the geneology of central ideas, but simply to urge that our attention to geneology not blind us to areas of contact. It does not take much prodding, for example, to allow students to discover the basic affinity between Pope's rejection of the "anthropocentric teleology" and contemporary ecological revaluations of man's place and prerogatives.

I stress the philosophical example of the *Essay on Man* because it seems to me a clear refutation of the argument that Augustan poems are difficult to teach because of the purely intellectual differences between Now and Then. Too much is made of that. The problematic difference is poetic: "Pope sounds so arrogant", "He's condescending and preaching," "He's just sitting up there, feeling superior." The last statement is potentially the most interesting, since at this point one can ask how feeling superior differs from feeling isolated or alienated or, for that matter, lonely as a cloud. The question is not rhetorical, but neither is it meant to elicit instant answers. Eventually it emerges that one discomfort is that we are not allowed to feel sorry for the poet, by which I mean and I hope more pedagogically than perversely) that we are not allowed to feel superior to him. Nor does he allow us to regress into emotional irresponsibility and warm oblivion. We can't mother and we can't suckle.

The fact is that Augustan poets tend to cultivate a middle-aged voice for themselves and assume a similar response from their audience. The speaker is generally a "settled" man, just as the reader is presumed *not* to be caught in the extremes of adolescent romance, not in the throes of religious or political despair, not in a crisis of personal identity. Many of these premises—of maturity, urbanity, equanimity—are often categorized as "classical" or neoclassical, and historical explanations abound. But for pedagogical purposes, the immediate problem is not one of geneology but of generation, and in two senses of the word: 1) how to transmit poems which are not only historically but psychologically "older" than most students, and 2) how to explain the generation of the poems themselves in view of modern assumptions about how and why poetry is generated.

The first half of the problem is not directly soluble. A teacher clearly serves neither students nor Augustan poetry by saying, "You'll like these poems better when you're 30 or 50." My own guess is that if the student is still reading poetry at 30 or 50, the statement will prove true; but it is the kind of remark which could only sound, and probably *be*, condescending in the classroom. What is potentially useful is that this problem be recognized for what it is, a personal and psychological difference of age, rather than solely a cultural difference of Age (as in "Age of Reason" versus "age Anxiety," etc.). Recognizing the problem in this way will undoubtedly lead instructors to many different conclusions about what is possible or desirable in a discussion of Pope or Dryden; recognition does not equal a formula for success, at least not in my own experience, though it may lead to a reappraisal of what success is. To the extent that one is concerned with making Augustan poetry accessible, it seems worthwhile to try to understand what some of the barriers are likely to be. A 19-year-old student, for example, who is emotionally preoccupied with a search for personal authenticity may well find it difficult to distinguish playfulness from "insincerity," rhetorical sureness from smugness, or artifice from callousness. (Applying Swiftian arithmetic to my classes, I would say that a 19-year-old reader is twice as likely to be irritated by the speakers of many Augustan poems as is a 38-year-old reader.) To admit this side of the problem is, I believe, at least to know something about what the problem is not: it is not, necessarily, a failure of literacy or, necessarily, a categorical opposition to the past.

The second half of the "generation" difference takes us back to the area of poetic occasion and the young lady's skepticism concerning the *Rape of the Lock*. To resume the narrative briefly, it is interesting that the immediate occasion of her question was not the fact that the poem was prompted by a feud or that it is a satire but the argument that Pope seems to have some admiration for his characters and their glittering world. She would have seen the point, she said, if Pope wanted to blast Belinda right off her barge. But if he didn't. . . ? The premises are again interesting, especially since the question extends beyond the matter of satiric intent to the poet's relationship to his society. Does a question of

this sort arise because we expect our poets to be wholly alienated, voluntarily or involuntarily, but decidedly, conspicuously opposed to Those Others? Is there a level at which we want to believe that the poet has No One He Can Talk To But Me? If so, Augustan poets can be highly irritating whenever (and it is more often than not) they seem to go out of their way to converse at ease with the society they may be opposing. Pope rarely seems to doubt that all who read will understand, and Dryden almost never. Pope has Arbuthnot as well as us; in fact, he even has his "victims" to talk *to* as well as *about*. Belinda is as much a part of Pope's audience as she is of his poem. And Dryden, to take a more extreme case, seems wholly confident that Shadwell—ponderous dunce that he is—will have no trouble understanding *Mac Flecknoe*.

These are not startling observations. The public, common-sense posture of Augustan poetry has often been noted and, with varying success, explained on historical grounds. One speaks, for instance, of a reaction against early-seventeenth century obscurantism or mid-seventeenth century "enthusiasm." Historical explanation, however essential, typically does a better job of illuminating the past in the light of an earlier past than of taking us from Now to Then. And the latter is the daily classroom problem. I am not urging a dismissal of intellectual history, or recommending that literary histories be written backwards (though one or two might be refreshing), but simply attempting to describe the kind of difference which seems to exist between the literature and the students I most care about. And to do so in terms broad enough to be of use to other teachers.

Perhaps two of the very broadest terms can provide an illustration. They are "society" and "nature." The first relates directly to the problem of poetry and audience. One is apt to notice that "society" is a near-mythic term for many contemporary students—"Society says that's not the way to do it," or "Society drove him insane"—and one could multiply examples in which the word operates as a tacit personification, constructions in which "Athena" or "Hera" might be substituted without radical transformation. What is meant, usually unconsciously, by using "society" in this way is something like, "Those Others, as Opposed to the Individual." The word "nature" presents an analogous problem. Never an easy word, in habitual modern use it appears increasingly to mean a place where there are no people, or more specifically, where there are No People Except Me.

Anyone familiar with the late-seventeenth and the early-eighteenth century will recognize the distance between these contemporary images and Augustan ideas of society and nature. But the point is not that words like "nature" and "society" therefore need to be glossed when one is teaching the *Essay on Man*. They undoubtedly do; but the differences also take a subtler and deeper course, cutting all the way to the root of many unspoken premises about the ideal relationship between poet, public, and private reader. A reader accustomed to regarding himself primarily as an individual and regarding poets as individuals *par*

excellence—in splendid opposition to Those Others—is naturally bewildered by much of what he finds and does not find in Augustan poetry. It may seem odd that there is so little confessional intimacy, odd that the poet is so apparently comfortable with one foot in and one out of his "society," odd that poems can grow out of social accidents and still carry a personal inevitability. All of this presents genuine difficulties for both teacher and student. But more and more this same sense of oddness, of real difference, seems to offer one of the most interesting starting points from which to hear what is meant by the voices around us and to examine anew what John Gay called the "Present State of Wit."

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Alternatives In Teaching Vocabulary

Carol Simnott

I tried it. Perhaps you have already; and, perhaps, you have not liked the results, either. At an unsuspecting class, at some undesignated moment, changing neither tone of voice, nor expression of face, I produced from my lips the sound formation that comes out, "vocabulary." How quickly it hit; I could hear "vocabulary" bounce from blackboard to wall...and back. How quickly my students responded. I heard a symphony of moans, a shuffling of feet, a nervous tap and a noisy tick; they became a musical ensemble tuning up for an academic jam session. That was year number one for me as a teacher. I asked myself quickly what I could do to overcome this massive tune out to such an important aspect of education.

The major difficulty, I have learned, is not an obstinacy to the accumulation of new words, for most students want to *know* a lot of words. The difficulty is their trepidations toward the grinding, grueling, and often boring, processes inherent to the acquisition of new vocabulary words.

I believe that our first concern, then, should not be a preoccupation with end result, i.e., students knowing "x" number of words, learned through "y" number of plug-in exercises, so proven by "z" number of tests, all contained within the cover-to-cover alphabetical order in Boring's *Vocabulary 11*. Rather, our primary concern should be with the development of a creative methodology which would open closed minds to the pleasantries of new word acquisition. The end result takes care of itself. Not only is word acquisition more extensive, but students tend to become excited about new words in a way which extends beyond the classroom.

I offer to you the following methods as alternatives to some of the traditional methods of teaching vocabulary.

RHYMING WORDS

From a list of one and two syllable vocabulary words (and their meanings), a student selects a word and rhymes it with another word. He offers a context clue to the class, who must ascertain his rhyme.

clue	*rhyme* (new word is *italicized*)
a husky female	a *burly* girlie
a royal animal	a *regal* beagle
an ostentatious vagabond	a *flagrant* vagrant

DROP A WORD

Teacher tells the class that this is a "Drop-a-Word" day, which means that the teacher has certain words in mind that he will use during the class period. Any time that the

students hear an unfamiliar word they must write it down. Several minutes are given at the end of the class period for students to look up their words. A quiz is given prior to the end of the class.

PICTURE YOUR WORD

Each student illustrates pictorially a vocabulary word, preferrably in a humorous or catchy manner. Students can explain and/or post their efforts.

ACT YOUR WORD

A student selects a word and acts out its meaning; this is especially useful when doing synonyms, as an aid in the understanding of subtle differences in connotation. The actor must elicit the word from his classmates.

TEACHING FOR TESTING

Each student puts a different vocabulary word on a flash card, and then he introduces it to his circularly-seated classmates. One student begins the round by reshowing his word; when another student gives the correct meaning, she gets to restate her word, etc. The objective is for each student to teach his word to as many other students as possible. In order for a student to get another turn to reinforce his word, however, he must learn the meanings of the other words.

When most students seem to know most words, students are asked to take out a sheet of paper. Each student then gives his word again for the others to write down its meaning. If, for example, 17 out of 20 students have learned the meaning of "clandestine," then the student who has taught "clandestine" might receive an "A" for that round. Very seldom have I found students to miss many words.

INCENTIVE

If a student achieves well on an important vocabulary test, he might be given a complicated, but interesting, logic question to do for extra credit.

TEAM FLASH

Class is divided into two teams. Each team has a group of flash cards with vocabulary words on them; meanings are on the backs of the cards; and, a list of the vocabulary words and meanings on the other team's flash cards. The teams are given a few minutes to learn the meanings of the other team's flash card words. Next, team members flash their cards and quiz the other team's members on the meanings. The first team able to give the meanings for all of the other team's words without error is the first-round winner. Teams exchange cards and begin a second round.

SYNONYMS

A word is put on the blackboard; students and teacher list as many synonyms as they know for the word. Then, either a collective list is put on the blackboard; or, the teacher puts his list of synonyms on the blackboard, and the students (in friendly competition) put their collective list up.

A WORD A DAY

A new vocabulary word is put up daily. Students are responsible for its meaning, spelling, and pronunciation, beginning with the next class. There is a multitude of possibilities for making that word significant. Its meaning might be required to get into

(or out of class) try to have an alternative to this "punishment"; knowing the meaning of a word might bring with it extra credit on a test that is not primarily concerned with vocabulary, giving the correct meaning to a word might allow a student the privilege of not *writing* out a homework assignment. The important points are that any of these words might show up at any time, and that there is a definite advantage for the student who knows the correct meaning.

Since year one, I have learned that vocabulary can be fun for my students and for myself. More importantly, I have found that as the methods become more creative, the students seem to learn a significantly greater number of words each year.

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The Handicapped Child In Children's Literature Themes, Patterns And Stereotypes

Barbara Holland Baskin

Humanism presumes a viewpoint which embraces a conceptualization of the individual in terms of uniqueness, striving and self-realization which stereotypic writing tends to reduce. The textual, illustrative and literary qualities of children's reading materials have been analyzed to assay the presentation of various minority groups to determine the frequency of omissions, distortions, inaccuracies and other such factors. The dismal results[1] of those surveys are now well known and constitute a deserved indictment of the ingrained bias against women, blacks, Indians and Mexican-Americans. The handicapped, as a specialized minority group, have been represented in similar ways. The manifestation of the problems they sustain has frequently been inadequately, inaccurately or over-emotionally demonstrated. In some books, the "message" is so strident that literary values fall by the wayside. In others, the incapacities resulting from the disability are grossly distorted and tend to caricature.

There are some exceptions to this tendency, notably, *Dead End Bluff*, which presents a blind boy in a realistic, vital manner, and *Andy and the Race course* which has as its protagonist a limited child who is delineated in a creative and unconventional way.

Stereotyping inevitably results in prejudice and the imposition of negative patterns. Repetitive themes depicting rejection of the child with special needs reinforces xenophobic attitudes and develops expectations for limited social roles. Perpetuation of this practice eventuates in a body of mythology that depersonalizes the individual and minimizes the possibility of the development of healthy and appropriate attitudes of positive identification. In many cases, the differences are presented in so alien or exotic a context that the reader becomes uncomfortable with the cognitive dissonance and the reader is somehow absolved of the need to respond to that disabled individual since that person is not "real."

Forty-five books have been selected for analysis, many of which can be found in a middle school library. Initially, these were obtained from sources such as Kircher, and teacher's and librarian recommendations.*

Certain categories of books were automatically excluded such as myths, folk tales and animal stories. Books which concentrated on minor problems relating to height, cosmetic imperfections, size and other relatively trivial issues were also eliminated. No inference should be made that this list is complete because an increasing amount of special problem books have been appearing on the market.

The body of books being described is one in which a central character, or one or more of the central characters, has a notable disability. In some few cases, the handicapped individual does not hold the focal position, e.g. *Simon and the Game of Chance*, but nonetheless exerts a powerful influence upon the mood or movement of the story. The disabilities sustained by the characters include sensory, orthopedic, neurological, motoric, social or intellectual difference which may negatively affect the functioning of the individual, limit his optimal development or demand intervention in his her life by schools, hospitals, foster families, agencies or some other social entity. Eight books focus on blindness, two on deafness, one combines both these categories, six concern themselves with emotional disturbance or social maladjustment, four concentrate on giftedness or high or unusual ability (!), five on speech-related-problems, twelve deal with illness, neurological or orthopedic disorders and six concentrate on characters with mild disability problems. Excluding the latter book, males (28), as might be expected, are more often highlighted than females (16), especially in historical settings. Characters of racial minorities are occasionally presented as in *The Jazz Man*, *Child of the Arctic*, *Sugar Bee and the Cay*.

The recurrence of certain themes and structural forms is expected in some literary genres as the folk tale. However, when certain patterns vividly emerge in the usually freer structural forms, one begins to suspect that these orientations represent largely unconscious, widely-held beliefs or perceptions which have become manifest in print. No major differences were found over the 31 year publishing period covered in this survey.

In the literature for children and youth, there has rarely been a character who has both a minor or cameo role and who incidentally happens to be disabled. That is, despite their wide prevalence in the community, they are frequently invisible in stories. If an author consciously decides to have a character who is disabled, that person usually has a service or symbolic role to play in the story line: *Elin's Amerika* and *The Young Unicorns* are rare examples of the incidental inclusion of the disabled. Very often, the exceptional character acts as a mechanism which accelerates or catapults the major character toward growth in self-acceptance, insight or maturity. We frequently have little insight into the disabled character: he/she acts as a deux ex machina or a litmus test for self-assessment of the non-disabled character. *A Single Light*, *Cathy at the Crossroads* and *Summer of the Swans* are examples of this phenomenon. In some instances, the main character sustains the dis-

ability and this is presented as a chastening event enabling the newly handicapped person to become more mature and more accepting of other people. In *The Cay* and *Follow My Leader*, we see the imposition of fortuitous disability as having ennobling consequences. In a few instances, the exceptional person acts as an example to others who are also disabled similarly (*The Witch's Brat*) or differently (*Mine for Keeps*).

Many of the stories were inundated with scenes of violence. These traumatic events sometimes generated the disability or were the sequelae of social attitudes toward the disabled. A sampling of some of the more gruesome events include temporary blindness as a result of being torpedoed and permanent blindness as a consequence of a firecracker "accident," amputation of the hand as an act of revenge, amputation of the tongue as an act of war and becoming blind as a result of being assaulted. In some books, the violence occurs after the condition of difference has already developed. A boy is stoned by villagers who later attempt to burn him (*Burnish Me Bright*) and in the sequel, he escapes from an unsuccessful assassination (*Far in the Day*), a retarded child is hit by a car (*Cathy at the Crossroads*), a mute boy is beaten and jailed (*King of the Wind*). In one book, an unfortunate connotation emerges that a boy has become disabled as a result of violating a religious maxim (*Johnny Tremaine*). In some stories, the violence is minor and the character is simply beaten in a physical fight (*Screwball*), (*Henry 3*). In others, the abuse is initially voiced by the community but then rapidly escalates into grotesque animosity as in *The Witch's Brat*, *A Single Light*, or *Burnish Me Bright*. In many of the stories, the antipathy remains at a verbal level (*A Certain Small Shepherd*). *Dorp Dead* potently unites both psychological and physical trauma into a tale with grisly overtones. These incidents are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY OF INCIDENTS OF DEATH OR VIOLENCE IN STORIES WITH DISABLED CHARACTERS

N=45

Incident	Frequency
Verbal abuse or rejection (by parents, teachers, employers, townspeople, etc.)	32
Parents of characters died or previously deceased	17
Violent physical abuse (amputation, stoning, kidnapping, beating, etc.)	14
Death of minor characters (before and during story)	13
Illness	13
Major physical accident (car accident, explosion, etc.)	10
Fighting with peers (handicapped child usually beaten, often rescued)	7

War and killing 6
Death or attempted death of animal mentioned 4
Death in childbirth 3

It is clear that evidence exists to support the assertion that the representation of the handicapped child in literature as well as in texts often perpetuates semantic bias, distorts the capabilities of the disabled by both under and overestimation of abilities, frequently dwells on cruelties and is excessively melancholy and punitive in tone. In the majority of the stories, the disabled child or adult is the victim of either verbal or physical abuse. Even though this character is subsequently revealed as the hero/heroine or is ultimately presented in a positive frame of reference, the reader has experienced the disabled person being abused. It seems reasonable to assume that this attitude must be reinforced when variations of the same event reoccur so frequently and that this cumulative effect must contribute to the exclusionary attitudes so endemic to society.

In many of the books such as *Child of the Arctic*, the exceptional characters, though ultimately developed as "good" or heroic, are shallow and dimensionless and are revealed as individuals only through the reactions of others. By contrast, some authors have created an extraordinarily rich interior elaboration such as *David in Silence*.

A small proportion of this collection are avowedly tracts written TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING. *One Little Girl* is really a non-book in the sense that the story line is so patently bent to meet the demands of proselytization that it ought not properly to be considered a book of fiction. The reader will need an emergency supply of insulin on hand as he/she wades through a saccharine pantheon of sainted school personnel and other unreal characters in *Wheels for Ginny's Chariot*. This latter type of story can only ultimately be counter-productive for the disabled and non-disabled reader alike.[3]

The disabled character's home life is frequently portrayed as being irregular in structure. He/she is often doubly handicapped by actual or symbolic presentation as an orphan. In some instances, Fate has been especially malevolent and the disabled child has not only lost a mother, but has lost her in childbirth in the process of delivering a disabled child, as in *A Certain Shepherd* and *A Single Candle*. Many are cared for by grandparent(s); (*My Brother Stevie*, *Three of a Kind*); by parent surrogates who frequently have some church affiliation; (*Hole in the Wall*, *The Namesake*, *Otto of the Silver Hand*); foster parents; (*Troublemaker*, *Escape to Witch Mountain*); neighbors; (*Celebrate the Morning*); aunts; (*Take Wing*, *Summer of the Swans*); or employers; (*Johnny Tremaine*, *King of the Wind*). In other instances, family members are very supportive and deeply involved with the child as in *Mine for Keeps* and *Sugar Bee*.

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY OF INTACTNESS AND NON-INTACTNESS OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURE IN LIFE OF DISABLED CHARACTER

Description of Family Structure	Frequency
Both parents usually present	15
Both parents deceased	7
One parent deceased, one parent symbolically absent	6
One parent always present; the other deceased, presumed dead or away	5
Both parents are away	4
Parent temporarily leaves	3
Both parents are away, one is presumed deceased	2
Misc	4

The interrelationship between violence, rejection and disability are clearcut and obvious. Occasionally, the elaboration of problems associated with disability is developed somewhat more subtly. The Dysfunctioning of the individual is perceived of as willful and deliberate or permitted by ignorance, powerlessness, laziness or neglect on the part of other persons. *Take Wing* and *The Jazz Man* illustrate this neatly. More than half of the books examined include a sequence where some character or a mob asserts that the disabled person "is crazy." This is sometimes a preface to isolation of that person (*Child of the Arctic*) or rejection (*Don't Take Teddy*). At various times this reaction is associated with witchcraft and is used as justification for violence or the exile of the person (*The Witch's Brat, Burnish Me Bright*). Sometimes the exceptional person uses this rejection as a defense against his peers (*Dorp Dead, A Wrinkle in Time*). Note that in these stories, as in *Henry 3* and the *Encylopedia Brown* series, the highly able child finds it more convenient to conceal his/her intellectual ability or to modify it in some way.

Research has revealed an odd coincidence, namely that the presence of one disabled character almost always insures the introduction of another. In some of the stories, one type of problem emerges (*King of the Wind*), speech-related problems predominate—mutism, stuttering and harelip (presumed) and in *Cathy at the Crossroads*, several children with retardation are discussed. In others, a great variety is presented (*Johnny Tremain, Heidi*, and *A Single Light*). In the latter book, the presence of so many exceptionalities strains the reader's credulity and borders on offensiveness. In *Three of a Kind*, humor is introduced connecting a

foster child, a child who doesn't speak and a misshapen cat named Reeject. In a few instances, the character is multiply handicapped (*The Jazz Man, Kristy's Courage*). An examination of Table 3 will reveal the frequency of the presence of multiple disabilities in other characters in this collection.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY OF THE PRESENCE OF EXCEPTIONALITIES OTHER THAN THE MAJOR EXCEPTIONALITY
N=45

Major Exceptionalities

Other Exceptionalities	Auditory Impairment	Emotional Disturbance	Giftedness, Creativity	Mental Retardation	Orthopedic, Neurological	Social Maladjustment	Speech Problems	Visual Impairment	Misc.
Amputation, other Orthopedic Problems				1	3	1		1	2
Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, etc.					3				
Deafness					2				
Emotional Disturbance		1			1	1			
Giftedness, Creativity		2	1					3	1
Mental Retardation, Illiteracy			1	3	5			2	
Physical Illness, etc.	1			2	3	1	2	1	
Social Maladjustment, Criminality	1		1	1	1		2	1	
Speech Problems	1				1		2	1	
Visual Impairment, Eye Problems					5	1			
Other					1		1		

Unquestionably, literature can play an important role in the identity process. This is a difficult matter for the disabled child who searches for a character who shares some of her/his attributes or for the sibling of the disabled. When the setting is depressing, when violence, repudiation, isolation, oppression and neglect are commonplace, the young

reader must inevitably draw certain conclusions. Conversely, when the story is overwhelmingly cloying or the characters are unfailingly optimistic, virtuous and cheerful, an unbridgeable credibility gap develops.

> The importance of good books about the handicapped is dual. It is of course desirable for handicapped youngsters to find within books that which they can identify, but it is equally important for physically normal children to learn intelligent understanding for the handicapped.[3]

In enlightened schools, the mildly and moderately disabled are being welcomed to the non-special school in greater and greater numbers. The extent of their psychological and social integration will to a large extent be mediated by the social perceptions of their non-disabled peers. The myths and stereotypes nurtured by media, anecdotes, literature and other acculturation agents need to be shattered through discussion, as well as through exposure to real and literary models if the disabled person is to be related to in terms of individual identity and not handicap.

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State University of New York
At Stony Brook
Stony Brook, New York

[illegible] Abel, M. Edgar, D. Rosenberg, M. and Tanner, R. C. and Dewar, T. S.

*I discovered that some authors finishing up research dealing with these themes have often persisted with the other related books or aspects.

Suggestion for this contribution was given by Ruth Veltman, librarian at the Human Resources School, Albertson, N. Y. a school for children with serious physical problems. She suggests that her pupils strongly prefer those books portraying characters which most closely relate to the experiences

[illegible] for all.

MEDIA REVIEW

Silent Running. Produced by Michael Gruskoff. Directed by Douglas Trumbull. 90 minutes. Distributed by Twyman, 329 Salem Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45401.

Joan Baez's song, "Rejoice in the Sun," draws the viewer into the visual splendor of the Edenic garden-in-space within which the drama of this science fiction film is played. Freeman Lowell, the film's protagonist, is a modern Noah who attempts to preserve the natural environment in the face of a polluted earth's indifference to his mission. Lowell, whose ship carries the only natural life left with which to refoliate the earth, rages against the synthetic existence and secure sterility of an earth maintained in the embryonic comfort of a constant 75°. Thus, when faced with command ship order to destroy the forests, he chooses to murder his fellow astronauts and to exist with his dreams alone in space.

Broken from communication with earth, cast out, a modern Cain, beyond the Rings of Saturn, speaking only with his fractured conscience, Lowell's disintegration takes form. The free man is no longer free—his silent running begins. Lowell has reached his childhood's end, yet the film does offer a larger hope for humanity: one forest dome, maintained by a drone, is saved by Lowell before he destroys himself in a searing nuclear blast. The final lyrics restate his hope: "Gather your children to your side. In the sun. Tell them it's not too late. . . . Tell them to harvest and rejoice. In the sun."

Suitable for High School level, the film is particularly relevant for Science Fiction and Social Problems.

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ERIC/RCS Report: Techniques and Materials for Improving Reading Skills in Secondary English

by

Rodney J. Barth

One of the objectives of the national Right to Read program is "Every teacher a teacher of reading." If this goal is to be realized, the plans of high school administrators, reading consultants, and classroom teachers will have to be supported by solid instructional procedures. English teachers will especially need more instructional materials and teaching techniques to develop both content and reading skills.

What many English teachers are looking for is information about available instructional materials and teaching techniques that develop skills to complement the reading levels of the course content. Without the appropriate skills, the path to employment, college, and the full humanistic development of each student may be blocked. The traditional responsibility of the English teacher has been not only to teach content, but also to teach the student how to learn. Translated into contemporary terms, this means intentionally teaching content and skills together. Though Hemingway rewrote *The Old Man and The Sea* 33 times before it was finally published, the student will be frustrated after trying to read it once if comprehension of the book is diminished by poor reading skills. The concerned English teacher trying to keep the doors of the future open for his students, not all of whom will become literary gourmets, requires a variety of materials to meet their individual needs.

The purpose of this article, then, is to suggest instructional materials that English teachers can use in the classroom to improve students' reading skills. The materials are divided into three sections: (I) Readings which discuss the concerns of content reading teachers in a general way, citing the implications of literature reviews and research outlining the basic and advanced skills to be applied in class activities; (II) Materials which specify methods for improving and expanding the student's ability to master the content of his courses; and (III) Guides which provide goals, objectives, and guidelines for teachers to use in planning instructional strategies, lessons, and units.

I

In order to develop effective instructional strategies, teachers need to be aware of which reading skills to stress in their specific content areas. *Reading in the Content Area* (Laffey, 1972) contains several chapters of particular interest to the English teacher. "Reading in Literature: The Importance of Student Involvement" reviews research on the relationship between reading ability and academic achievement in literature, and analyzes some of the reading problems peculiar to the study of literature. A second article, "Reading in Literature: Student Involvement Is Just the Beginning," applies research findings to classroom instruction and provides practical suggestions for developing relevant reading skills applicable to all genres of literature. (Skills stressed for reading literature include the development of a general and technical vocabulary, interpretation, critical reading, and comprehension of main ideas.)

While Laffey presents research findings as the basis for determining instructional strategies and practices, Dechant (1973) takes quite a different approach. In a comprehensive statement about the reading problems of adolescent students, he relates the principles of learning and learning theory to the teaching of reading. Using a linguistic orientation, Dechant guides the teacher through the procedure for developing word recognition skills, comprehension skills, and rate skills. Although Dechant covers more than content reading in literature, he maintains that the English teacher is often responsible not only for teaching symbols and metaphors, but for providing sufficient instruction in more basic skills so that the student can learn social studies, mathematics, and science. Since the skills necessary for academic success in the different content areas do overlap, the English teacher will find this work useful both as a general reference and as a resource from which to develop lessons and units.

II

Some school systems may wish to formalize the teaching of reading in English as well as in other subjects. Anthony (1972) prepared a study in anticipation of such formalized programs. The purpose of the study was to develop a conceptual model which could be used by administrators, consultants, and teachers to implement programs to improve reading instruction in secondary schools. Ten goals were determined and placed in an open-ended opinionnaire. Principals, teachers of reading, and content area teachers from 74 Arizona secondary schools were asked to express agreement or disagreement with the validity of the goals and to identify those forces they felt were helping or hindering the attainment of the goals. The conceptual model developed from a synthesis of the data contained particularly noteworthy implications concerning the contributions of content area teachers to reading instruction. The results of this and other studies, combined with the national

Right to Read effort, further underline the English teacher's important role in improving student reading skills.

One school which already has an operational program in content reading is the University of Chicago Laboratory School. Robinson and Thomas (1969) edited a volume which describes the development of the program from its inception through its present state as a viable method of teaching reading skills in the content courses. Eleven teachers provide insights into how a teacher in his own content area can upgrade his students' reading, and an administrator and reading consultant at the school relate how they support the reading effort. For English teachers who may wish to know more about the role of the administrator and the reading consultant in such a program, several other topics of concern are also examined. These include what approach to use in English, reading skills common to this specific subject area, the conditions for critical reading, and the ideas for vocabulary enrichment.

While the importance of know how to determine which skills to teach and how to develop such a program cannot be stressed enough, teachers must also have methods and materials available for purposes of instruction. In their followup to the Chicago Laboratory School program, Thomas and Robinson (1972) presented some of the successful methods and materials for teaching reading that are of special interest to English teachers. Such methods include building vocabulary and word attack skills, improving comprehension, developing flexibility in reading rate, and fostering reading skills for problem solving and topic development while studying literature. The course content and the basic skills for studying literature are equally emphasized.

Clearly, the responsibility of the teacher is to show the learner what is required of him. To do this, both the nature of the skills and the process of acquiring them need to be stressed. In keeping with this view Herber (1970) presents additional methods and materials which English teachers can use to help their students develop the reading skills necessary to understand their subjects on a level commensurate with their mental capabilities. This highly prescriptive handbook describes a framework for teaching reading skills, while shifting the responsibility for learning to the student. In this context, Herber covers such aspects of content reading as levels of comprehension, reasoning beyond reading, and technical vocabulary and language development.

For the English teacher, whether teaching basic reading skills or more refined critical thinking skills, the major objective is still the expression of ideas. Shepherd (1973) emphasizes specific and practical methods a teacher can use to fuse reading skills and content and to spark communication in literature and language arts. In a chapter entitled "Applying Reading Skills to the English Class," Shepherd states, "The goals of language arts are basically the same as those of education in general, since language and communication are intrinsic to all curricula" (p. 169). Therefore, Shepherd shows how reading skills can

be incorporated into almost all subject areas, with the discipline of English receiving particular attention. He includes general guidelines for lessons, steps for an English unit, and ways to individualize instruction.

III

For teachers who are already familiar with the literature on teaching reading in the English classroom and have numerous materials and methods but do not yet have a formal plan for instruction, the following resources may prove useful. *Working Draft for Guidelines for the Teaching of Reading in the Content Areas* (1971) presents general guidelines for teaching reading in content area classroom and includes specific suggestions for English. The guidelines are intended to familiarize teachers with a critical area in which they can help in developing reading skills. Teachers are expected to be masters of the subject matter, to be aware of students' needs in reading, to attempt to motivate and instruct students in reading at their individual levels, and to be familiar with common reading and language terminology and sources of information. Sample lesson plans are included for English.

Another guide which should prove helpful is *A Reading Skills Guide for Use in the Content Areas at the Junior and Senior High School Level* (1971). This guide, designed for use by content area teachers in their work with students who have minor reading difficulties, contains a number of assessment techniques as well as a variety of approaches and suggestions for teaching. The study guides are developed around a topic for a specific area, are complete in themselves, and are ready for the teacher to use whenever appropriate. Materials include teaching ideas for improving reading comprehension, study skills, and vocabulary.

For teachers desiring more specific instructional materials, course guides and teaching guides to specific reading problems in English are also available. Campbell (1971) developed a teaching guide designed to assist high school students who have not achieved mastery of decoding skills. In Campbell's approach, students learn to deal systematically with the basic word-pattern of English and to analyze the structure of word pairing, morphology, roots, prefixes, suffixes, and derived inflectional forms. Additional emphasis is given to instruction in the use of redundancies and identification of previously unknown words, and in verifying word meanings that are modified by context clues.

In a teaching guide by Heimbuch and Moore (1971) for students who have command of basic skills, more advanced skills and varied materials are taught in a course emphasizing reading rate. The course is primarily designed to teach students how to select reading materials at their reading levels, determine their reading rates, and adapt reading pace to various kinds of materials depending on the type of information sought. Instructional objectives, rationale, teaching strategies, learning

activities, and resource materials are outlined in detail, and a list of materials used in the course is included.

Another source available to classroom teachers is the Instructional Objectives Exchange (IOX). The IOX collected objectives and measurement items based upon curricular material either submitted by teachers, schools, and school districts, or generated by the IOX staff. *Reading, 7-12* (1972) contains 93 objectives and related evaluation items for improving reading skills. The objectives are organized first by grade level and then into the categories of comprehension, study skills, and word recognition. Three elements—the objective, measurement items, and the means of judging the adequacy of student responses—are stated in operational terms and identified by a category and subcategory which serve to limit and define them. Specific answers to the sample measurement questions or criteria for judging the adequacy of students' responses are provided.

The last word in instruction is, of course, evaluation. While the IOX provides some means of evaluating student learning, Vlox (1968) includes a plethora of evaluation techniques. Evaluation procedures include standardized reading tests, teacher-made informal reading tests, inventories of reading and study skills, interest inventories, and teacher observation. Suggestions are made and samples are shown for the development of informal reading tests and inventories in content subjects. Uses of classroom evaluation results are described for lesson planning, student motivation, student understanding, intrafaculty consultation, and teaching techniques for use with students having reading difficulty.

With the increased emphasis on reading in the content area of English, teachers can turn to the ERIC system, the source of the preceding information. For additional materials and techniques that will fulfill specific instructional needs, teachers are invited to peruse *Research in Education* (RIE) and *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE) under the following thesaurus terms: Content Reading, English Instruction, Curriculum Guides, Critical Reading, Instructional Materials, and Secondary Education.

USING THE ERIC SYSTEM

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills is sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. ERIC's objective is to keep educators informed about current developments in education. Information collected by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the other ERIC Clearinghouses can be ordered from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210. For complete ordering information consult the monthly issues of *Resources in Education* (RIE) or contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Documents with ED numbers are indexed in *Resources in Education*. Those with EJ numbers are indexed in *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE). And those with CS numbers are recently acquired materials. ED or EJ numbers will soon be assigned.

"But, Teacher . . ." (A Satirical Tribute to a Teacher)

By David Vallelunga

To understand a student,
You must be a certain type;
Your hearing should be perfect;
All you hear is gripe, gripe, gripe.

To understand a student,
You must possess a special charm;
Your temper should be zero;
There should be *no* cause for alarm.

To understand a student,
You must be a certain kind,
Have an aptitude for reading lips,
And have a very cunning mind.

To understand a student,
And understand him well,
You cannot be *too* punctual;
Who cares about the bell?

To understand a student
You surely cannot say,
"Your spelling word is 'malt$\bar{e}$as$\acute{a}$nce,'
Spell it right today."

Now, it's been a long, hot summer,
And all of us forget,
Spelling words and parallels,
Verb tense and predicate.

When you understand a student
Don't just sit there, in a stupor;
Come out and say, "I understand"
And then we'll think you're super!

David Vallelunga, 9th Grade
Schenendehowa Middle School B
Elnora, New York 12065

Mr. Edward T. Hughes, Teacher

All materials are indexed. Names of *authors* are italicized. The first number after my entry specifies the volume in which the entry appeared; subsequent numbers specify the issue and pages of the appearance.

A Brief Introduction to the ERIC System, *Daniel J. Dieterich*; XXIV, 1, 52.
A Laugh That Failed, *Ronald J. Goba*; XXV, 2, 75.
A Look at the Secondary School Curriculum in English, *Harold C. Martin*; XXV, 4, 25.
A Talk To Teachers, *Jonathan Kozol*; XXV, 4, 96.
American Novelists as Poets: The Schizophrenia of Mode, *Lewis Turco*; XXV, 3, 23.
Anti-Totalitarian Fiction, *Gordon Beadle*; XXV, 3, 30.
Armistead, J.M., Students as Motion Picture Audience: A Proposal; XXV, 2, 91.
As They Like It—A Visual Approach to Shakespeare for Young Students, *Leonore M. Horowitz*; XXV, 3, 74.
Axelrod, Jerome, The Reading Teacher's Right to Write; XXV, 3, 85.
Bachner, Saul, Baseball As Literature: BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY; XXV, 2, 83.
Ballads from Hell (Hang On, Ixion; Chin Up, Tantalus), *J. Douglas Canfield*; XXIV, 1, 66.
Baseball as Literature: BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY, *Saul Bachner*; XXV, 2, 83.
Beadle, Gordon, Anti-Totalitarian Fiction; XXV, 3, 30.
Before December, *Frank O'Brien*; XXIV, 1, 62.
Behavioral Objectives for Everyman, *Michael J. Melerski*; XXV, 2, 34.
Behavioral Objectives: One More Time, *Donald J. Sheehan*; XXV, 2, 81.
The Bidialectal Student, *Rodolfo Jacobson*; XXIV, 1, 41.
Blake, Robert W., One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch—and One Day in Ours; XXV, 3, 91.
Blench, David, Subjectivity in the Classroom; XXIV, 1, 4.
Book Reviews, *Daniel J. Casey, Robert E. Saunders*; XXIV, 1, 69-70.
Bourdette, Robert E., Jr., and Cohen, Michael M., Frost's "Ann" and the Problem of Interpretation; XXV, 2, 53.
Butterfield, Stephen J., The Package Store; XXIV, 1, 55.
Canfield, J. Douglas, Ballads from Hell (Hang On, Ixion; Chin Up, Tantalus); XXIV, 1, 66.
Career Education and the English Curriculum, *Steven Graff*; XXV, 1, 70.
Caroselli, Marlene, Was General Electric an American?; XXV, 1, 60.
Casey, Daniel, Book Review; XXIV, 1, 69.
———, Ethnic Literature: An Introduction; XXV, 1, 23.
———, Editorial Intimidation: A Twenty-Year Record; XXV, 4, 7.
Chamard, John T., Media Review; XXV, 2, 95.
Child Drama . . . and Jonathan Livingston Seagull, *Prentiss M. Hosford and Elizabeth Acheson*; XXV, 3, 70.
Chisholm, Frances E., The Linguistically Disadvantaged: Some Suggested Approaches and Solutions; XXV, 2, 67.
Clark, John R., Satiric Singing: An Example from Rochester; XXIV, 1, 16.
The College Program of English Vocabulary, *Leo L. Rockwell*; XXV, 4, 44.
Connolly, Francis X., Literary Theory and the Teaching of Literature; XXV, 4, 65.
Creative Supervision in the Secondary School, *Joseph Mersand*; XXV, 4, 62.
Daigon, Arthur, The Education Game; XXV, 4, 109.
Dieterich, Daniel J., A Brief Introduction to the ERIC System; XXIV, 1, 52.
Drake, Elizabeth J., The First Ten Years; XXV, 4, 3.
Drews, Elizabeth M., Individual Differences: The Basic Problem in Planning a Junior High School Reading Program; XXV, 4, 41.
Duke, Charles R., Mark Twain: Speaker at Large; XXV, 2, 43.

Early, Margaret J., Reading Skills for the Forgotten In-Betweens, XXV, 4, 32.
Editorial Intimidation: A Twenty-Year Record, *Daniel J. Casey*, XXV, 4, 7.
The Education Game, *Arthur Dargon*, XXV, 4, 109.
English Elective Programs: An ERIC/RCS Review, *David Isaacson*, XXV, 1, 90.
English Student's Become Children's Book Authors, *E. J. Frank*, XXV, 1, 74.
ERIC/RCS Review: Approaches to Teaching Poetry, *Laurel Ladevich*, XXV, 2, 98.
Ethnic Literature: An Introduction, *Daniel J. Casey*, XXV, 1, 23.
The First Ten Years, *Elizabeth J. Drake*, XXV, 4, 3.
Flora, Joseph M., Jacob Barnes' Name: The Other Side of the Ledger, XXIV, 1, 14.
For This is Also Sooth, *Frank O'Brien*, XXIV, 1, 62.
Frank, E. J., English Students Become Children's Book Authors, XXV, 1, 74.
French, Roberta W., On Teaching "Richard Cory", XXIV, 1, 11.
_____, What To Teach?, XXV, 3, 40.
Frost's "Cam" and the Problem of Interpretation, *Robert E. Bourdette, Jr., and Michael M. Cohen*, XXV, 2, 53.
"Gee You're a Nice Guy but a Lousy Teacher!", *Peter M. Schitt*, XXV, 3, 34.
Goals in Teacher Education Programs for Junior High School Teachers of Language Arts, *Ario Jewett*, XXV, 4, 50.
Gorba, Reginald J., A Laugh That Failed, XXV, 2, 75.
Gratt, Steven, Career Education and the English Curriculum, XXV, 1, 70.
Grammer, Marion, Media Review, XXIV, 1, 71; XXV, 2, 96.
Green, Maxine, Teaching the Literature of Protest, XXV, 4, 89.
Hartley, Helene W., Some Current Issues in English Instruction, XXV, 4, 21.
Haskell, John F., Retiming the Cloze Procedure for English-As-Second Language, XXV, 1, 77.
Hoffman, Melvin J., The Teaching of Pronunciation in the Second Dialect Classroom, XXV, 3, 13.
Horowitz, Leonore W., As They Like It—A Visual Approach to Shakespeare for Young Students, XXV, 3, 74.
Hosford, Prentiss M. and Acheson, Elizabeth, Child Drama . . . and Jonathan Livingston Seagull, XXV, 3, 70.
How Television can be Used to Motivate Students who are Turned Off to Literature, *Marilyn S. Peckman*, XXV, 3, 57.
Individual Differences: The Basic Problem in Planning a Junior High School Reading Program, *Elizabeth M. Drews*, XXV, 4, 41.
Infantino, Robert, Let's Get On With Behavioral Objectives, XXV, 2, 36.
Irish Studies as a High School Elective, *Peter O'Connor*, XXV, 1, 44.
Isaacson, David, English Elective Programs: An ERIC/RCS Review, XXV, 1, 90.
Jacob Barnes' Name: The Other Side of the Ledger, *Joseph M. Flora*, XXIV, 1, 14.
Jacobson, Rodolfo, The Bidialectal Student, XXIV, 1, 41.
Jewett, Ario, Goals in Teacher Education Programs for Junior High School Teachers of Language Arts, XXV, 4, 50.
The Jewish Literature Elective, *Sheila Schwartz*, XXV, 1, 35.
Klinzing, Dennis R. and Acton, Joyce F., What English Teachers Should Know About Criticizing Students' Classroom Speeches, XXV, 3, 42.
Kozol, Jonathan, A Talk to Teachers, XXV, 4, 96.
Ladevich, Laurel, ERIC/RCS Review: Approaches to Teaching Poetry, XXV, 2, 98.
Lauer, Kristin O., The Psychology of Remediation, XXV, 3, 3.
Learning to Speak and Learning to Read, *Isadore Lecane*, XXV, 4, 71.
Lefcourt, Charles R., Major Barbara: An Exercise in Shavian Wit and Wisdom, XXV, 2, 27.
Let's Get On With Behavioral Objectives, *Robert Infantino*, XXV, 2, 36.
Lecane, Isadore, Learning to Speak and Learning to Read, XXV, 4, 71.
"Like, You Know, I Mean, Right?", *Ezald B. Nyquist*, XXV, 1, 12.

The Linguistically Disadvantaged: Some Suggested Approaches and Solutions, *Francis E. Chisholm;* XXV, 2, 67.
Literary Theory and the Teaching of Literature, *Francis X. Connolly;* XXV, 4, 65.
Literature and Tests, *Alan C. Purves;* XXV, 4, 85.
Literature: Your World and Welcome To It, *Barrett John Mandel;* XXV, 1, 2.
Major Barbara: An Exercise in Shavian Wit and Wisdom, *Charles R. Lefcourt;* XXV, 2, 27.
Mandel, Barrett John, Literature: Your World and Welcome To It; XXV, 1, 2.
Mangione, Anthony Roy, The Story That Has Not Been Told; XXV, 1, 25.
Mark Twain: Speaker at Large, *Charles R. Duke;* XXV, 2, 43.
Martin, Harold C., A Look at the Secondary School Curriculum in English; XXV, 4, 25.
McClain, Edwin W., and Christiansen, Mark A., Personality Differences Between Successful and Unsuccessful Student Teachers of English; XXIV, 1, 35.
McKenna, John H., Renaming and Differentiating Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties; XXV, 3, 49.
Media Review, *Helen Wilder, ed., Marion Grammer, Robert A. Mullins;* XXIV, 1, 71-74; *Helen Wilder,* XXV, 1, 87; *Helen Wilder, Marion Grammer, John T. Chamard,* XXV, 2, 95-97.
Melerski, Michael J., Behavioral Objectives for Everyman; XXV, 2, 34.
Mersand, Joseph, Creative Supervision in the Secondary School; XXV, 4, 62.
Mullins, Robert A., Media Review; XXIV, 1, 72.
My Grandmother, *Paul Ruffin;* XXIV, 1, 65.
Narration: Its Importance in the Teaching of Literature, *William J. Reeves;* XXV, 2, 64.
Neumeyer, Peter F., One Way to Trim the School Budget; XXV, 2, 16.
Ney, James W., Pikers, Preachers and English Teachers; XXIV, 1, 21.
Non-Standard Negro Dialect: Myth or Reality, *Dennis Wiseman;* XXV, 3, 9.
Nyquist, Ewald B., "Like, You Know, I Mean, Right?"; XXV, 1, 12.
O'Brien, Frank, For This is Also Sooth; Before December; XXIV, 1, 62.
O'Connor, Peter, Irish Studies as a High School Elective; XXV, 1, 14.
On Teaching "Richard Cory," *Roberts W. French;* XXIV, 1, 11.
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch—and One Day in Ours, *Robert W. Blake;* XXV, 3, 94.
One Way to Trim the School Budget, *Peter F. Neumeyer;* XXV, 2, 16.
The Package Store, *Stephen J. Butterfield;* XXIV, 1, 55.
Patton, Elizabeth, Theft; Reverie; XXIV, 1, 64.
Peckman, Marilyn S., How Television can be Used to Motivate Students who are Turned Off to Literature; XXV, 3, 57.
Personality Differences Between Successful and Unsuccessful Student Teachers of English, *Edwin W. McClain and Mark A. Christiansen;* XXIV, 1, 35.
Pikers, Preachers and English Teachers, *James W. Ney;* XXIV, 1, 21.
Pooley, Robert C., Where Are We At?; XXV, 4, 10.
The Psychology of Remediation, *Kristin O. Lauer;* XXV, 3, 3.
Purves, Alan C., Literature and Tests; XXV, 4, 85.
Queen, Renee, The Sex Role: Myths We Teach, XXV, 2, 20.
Reading Skills for the Forgotten In-Betweens, *Margaret J. Early;* XXV, 4, 32.
The Reading Teacher's Right to Write, *Jerome Axelrod;* XXV, 3, 85.
Reeves, William J., Narration: Its Importance in the Teaching of Literature, XXV, 2, 64.
Refining the Cloze Procedure for English-As-Second Language, *John F. Haskell,* XXV, 1, 77.
Renaming and Differentiating Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties, *John H. McKenna;* XXV, 3, 49.
Reverie, *Elizabeth Patton;* XXIV, 1, 64.
Rockwell, Leo L., The College Program of English Vocabulary; XXV, 4, 44.
Rogers, Marjorie, Try It On Monday; XXV, 1, 83; XXV, 2, 87; XXV, 3, 96.

Rounds, Robert W., Teaching Composition in the Junior High School; XXV, 4, 36.
Rubin, Paul, My Grandmother; XXIV, 1, 65.
Satiric Singing: An Example from Rochester, *John R. Clark*; XXIV, 1, 16.
Saunders, Robert E., Book Review; XXIV, 1, 69.
Schiff, Peter M., "Give You the Nice Guy But a Lousy Teacher!"; XXV, 3, 34.
The Schoolmaster: Teaching Sixteenth-Century Literature, *Theodore L. Steinberg*; XXV, 1, 54.
Schwartz, Nancy, Teaching Creative Dramatics to Migrant Children; XXIV, 1, 29.
Schwartz, Sheila, The Jewish Literature Elective; XXV, 1, 35.
The Sex Role Myths We Teach, *Renee Queen*; XXV, 2, 20.
Sherban, Donald J., Behavioral Objectives: One More Time; XXV, 2, 31.
Some Current Issues in English Instruction, *Helene W. Hartley*; XXV, 4, 21.
Square, James R., Three Ideas About English; XXV, 4, 78.
Steinberg, Theodore L., The Schoolmaster: Teaching Sixteenth-Century Literature; XXV, 1, 54.
The Story That Has Not Been Told, *Anthony Roy Mangione*; XXV, 1, 25.
Students as Motion Picture Audience: A Proposal, *J. M. Armistead*; XXV, 2, 91.
Subjectivity in the Classroom, *David Bleich*; XXIV, 1, 4.
Teaching Composition in the Junior High School, *Robert W. Rounds*; XXV, 4, 36.
Teaching Creative Dramatics to Migrant Children, *Nancy Schwartz*; XXIV, 1, 29.
The Teaching of Pronunciation in the Second Dialect Classroom, *Melvin J. Hoffman*; XXV, 3, 13.
Teaching the Literature of Protest, *Maxine Green*; XXV, 4, 89.
Theft, *Elizabeth Patton*; XXIV, 1, 64.
Three Ideas About English, *James R. Square*; XXV, 4, 78.
To Teach Black Culture, Serve 'Em Soul, *Norma A. Wanzer*; XXV, 3, 19.
Try It On Monday, *Marjorie Rogers*; XXV, 1, 83; XXV, 2, 87; XXV, 3, 96.
Turco, Lewis, American Novelists as Poets: The Schizophrenia of Mode; XXV, 3, 23.
Wanzer, Norma A., To Teach Black Culture, Serve 'Em Soul; XXV, 3, 19.
Was General Electric an American?, *Marlene Caroselli*; XXV, 1, 60.
What English Teachers Should Know About Criticizing Students' Classroom Speeches, *Dennis R. Klinzing and Joyce E. Acton*; XXV, 3, 42.
What To Teach?, *Roberts W. French*; XXV, 3, 30.
Where Are We At?, *Robert C. Pooley*; XXV, 4, 10.
Wilder, Helen, Media Review; XXIV, 1, 71; XXV, 1, 87; XXV, 2, 96-97.
Wiseman, Dennis, Non-Standard Negro Dialect: Myth or Reality; XXV, 3, 9.